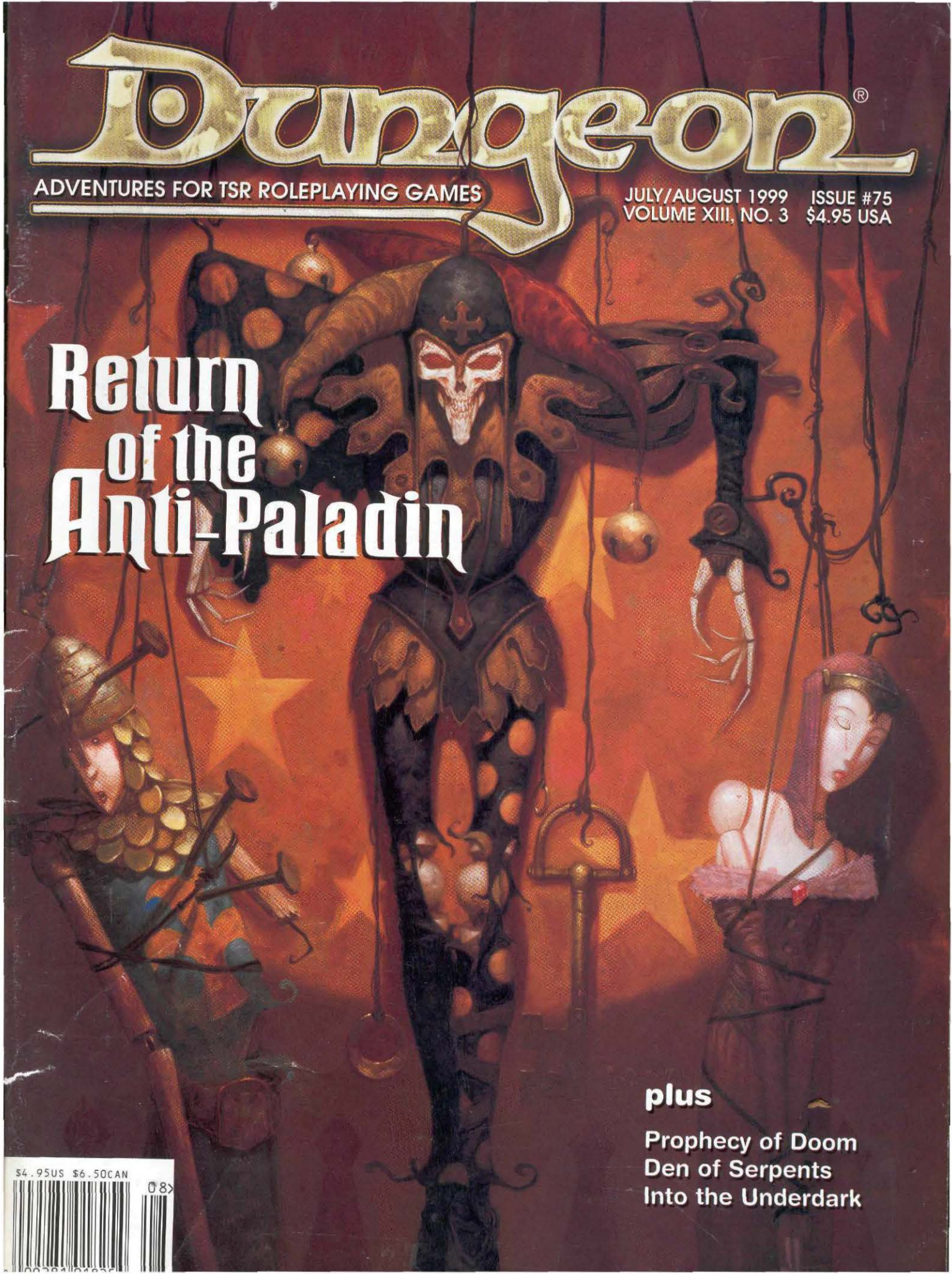
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ISSUE #75
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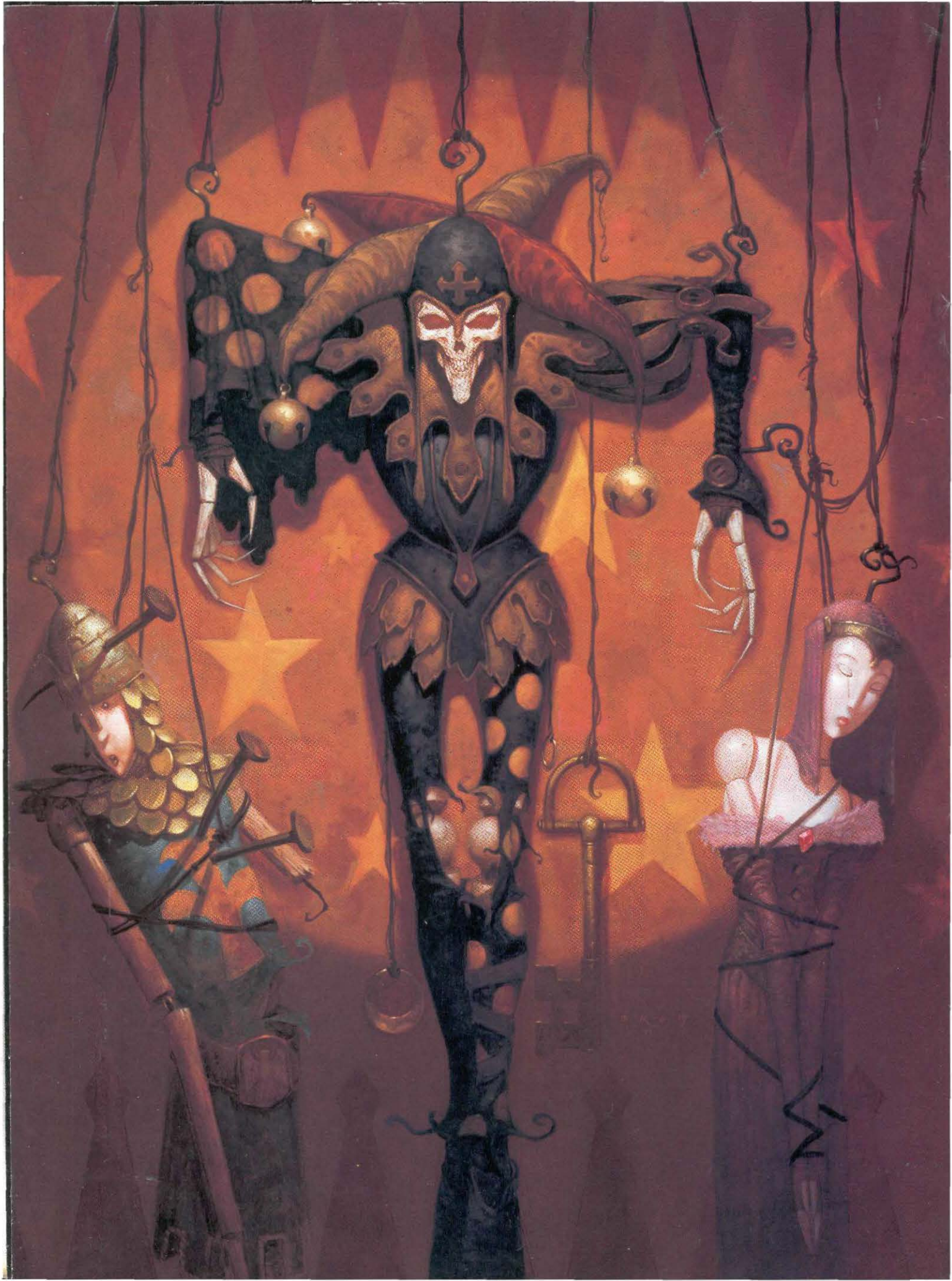

Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLEPLAYING GAMES

JULY/AUGUST 1999
ISSUE #75

The dream of reason produces monsters. Imagination deserted by reason creates impossible, useless thoughts. United with reason, imagination is the mother of all art and the source of all its beauty.

— Francisco Jose De Goya Y Lucientes

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Brom shows us the puppets, but where's the puppeteer? You'll have to read "The Forgotten Man" to answer this riddle.

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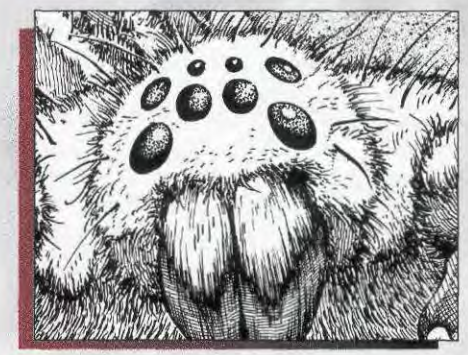

Editorial

To the Point!

For the past two years, I've played a fighter in the world of Praemal, Monte Cook's ongoing AD&D® campaign. The world is ambitious and peculiar, much as you'd expect from someone who's spent the last several years invoking the wacky, otherworldly idiosyncrasies of the PLANESCAPE® setting. In Praemal, all great heroes have destinies, all major villains have world-spanning ambitions, and all important features of the land have a surreal majesty. A door is seldom just a door, a forest is never what it seems, and the laws of physics are routinely trampled. Week after week, Monte reminds me that weird *can* work—and that fun sometimes means breaking the rules.

One of the greatest aspects of our weekly game is the idea of Hero Points. This isn't a new idea, but no epic campaign should be without them. Hero Points are awarded to characters who perform heroic deeds, usually at great personal risk. Monte doles out the points sparingly; rarely does a character have more than one or two. In the past, my characters have used Hero Points to perform seemingly impossible feats, accomplish multiple tasks at once, evade or parry a lethal blow, or inflict incredible amounts of damage with a successful strike.

Bruce Cordell once used a Hero Point to bring his unconscious character back to consciousness. Michele Carter used one to strike a target unerringly with her ranger's bow. I vaguely remember Sean Reynolds' mighty wizard, Nosh, using a Hero Point to make a *magic mouth* spell permanent. My lizard man fighter, Ves, used a Hero Point to impale a wraith and its summoner on his magical spear with a single charge.

Hero Points have not unbalanced our game sessions. I can tell you that when two of the PCs have been blasted into oblivion by *cone of cold* spells and the survivors are facing a 90'-tall yuan-ti atop a half-shattered tower, a player can send chills of anticipation through the entire group by declaring that he or she is using a precious Hero Point. Will the player use the Hero Point to counter a devastating attack, strike the villain where it hurts, or save the life of a companion trapped in the villain's clutches? The way I see it, Hero Points have enhanced our game in three substantial ways:

- They encourage players to take risks with their characters, often with spectacular results. They are more tangible and immediately useful than bonus XP awards.
- A Hero Point is the DM's way of saying, "You have my permission to bend the rules ... once." In a game where success is often determined by a random die roll—where it's unbecoming for the party's paladin to roll a 1 when fighting her arch-nemesis or evil twin—sometimes it's nice to have a Hero Point to affect or alter the outcome.
- Because they are available only to the player characters, Hero Points elevate PCs above the everyday "rabble." They make otherwise ordinary characters remarkable and enable these PCs to accomplish truly heroic deeds once in a while.

I plan to use Hero Points in all of my future AD&D campaigns. If you haven't used them before, try using them in your campaign, and let us know how it works out!

Chris Perkins

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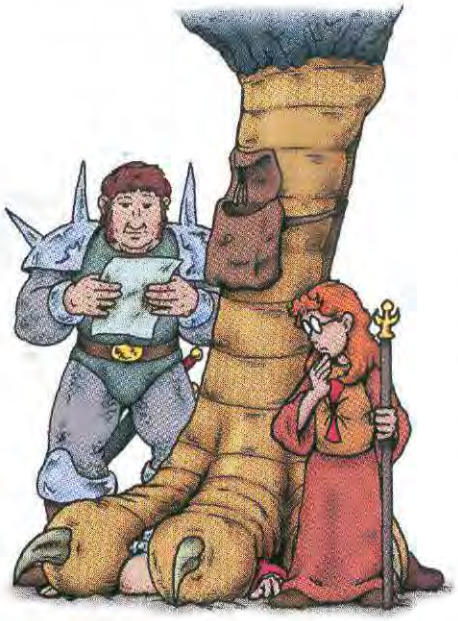

Any thoughts on the adventures in this issue? Write to "Letters," *DUNGEON® Adventures*, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055. You can also email us at **dungeon@wizards.com**.

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Druids Turning Banshees

I just read "The Oops File" in Issue #74 regarding druids and the turning of undead in "Quoitine Quest" (Issue #73). While it is generally true that druids do not turn undead (and furthermore that undead do not normally have a place in the Celtic world), Celtic druids are in fact able to turn banshees. The *Celts* campaign sourcebook, page 42, says that "Undead are very rare in the Celtic world, and the banshee is the only common example. Druids can attempt to turn banshees as though they were clerics of the same level."

The statement in the sidebar of the adventure is accurate. It is directed at DMs who wish to run the module according to the *Celts* sourcebook, and the recommendation in that paragraph is to treat Lady Penrhys as a banshee.

Gregory Rick
via email

Great Glacier Series?

I want to give a pat on the back and a round of applause to everyone involved in the creation of the Mere of Dead Men series in Issues #69–73.

I would certainly enjoy seeing another adventure series grace the pages of your wondrous magazine, perhaps one that might involve the Great Glacier in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting?

Waiting several months to get the entire series' plot is a bit harsh. Maybe next time you could publish two of the adventures in the same issue and cut down the waiting time. No matter how you do it, I think it's worth it.

Lastly, I agree with Paul Gindlesperger's letter in Issue #73 where he said that no adventure is "useless." Currently, I run a FORGOTTEN REALMS and a SPELLJAMMER® campaign, and if I can't use an adventure by changing its place and names or by putting it in a crystal sphere somewhere, then I'm falling asleep at the reins and need a nap. There's no adventure out there that's completely useless.

Michael Cravens
Crescent City, CA

Not All at Once!

In Issue #73, the editor asks for the readers' suggestions concerning the future of serialized adventures. Here's mine:

Do not, under any circumstances, compile all of the adventures of a series into a single issue. The idea of a "serial module" adds nicely to the diversity of content in each issue, the very same diversity that makes the magazine such a healthy germination ground for new ideas. To discard that variety, even for a single issue, would be a terrible folly that could only lead to stagnation. What's more, ten months does not seem like a very long time at all to read, process, and use all of the material presented in a series like the Mere of Dead Men. Each installment of the series contains the makings for at least several game sessions, which means that players of a weekly game needn't wait long for each adventure. This becomes more true if *DUNGEON Adventures* becomes a monthly publication.

Jeffrey Froman
Boulder, CO

continued on page 10

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Wish List

I congratulate you and your contributors on an excellent magazine. I am happy to see the same basic format continue, maybe with more "player's viewpoint art." The idea of "theme issues," as suggested by Richard A. Hunt in Issue #74, fills me with foreboding. The variety of scenarios in each issue makes *DUNGEON Adventures* strong. Themed issues might cause people to avoid specific months if they see no use for them. I don't mind the occasional PLANESCAPE® or RAVENLOFT® adventure (they are often interesting and may have useful ideas in them), but I would view a complete issue dedicated to such as being a waste of my money. I am also happy with six issues per year; any more and I think I would go crazy! I have such a back-log of *DUNGEON* scenarios I want to run already.

I agree with Jason B. Bartlett in his comments on publishing articles. Could I suggest that you actually publish some kind of "league table" that shows just how stiff the competition is? You know the sort of thing: number of submissions, rewrites, acceptances, etc. This could be supplemented by an indication of the most frequently submitted (and rejected) ideas/monsters and a "wish list" for the same.

To finish, the only other thing I might suggest is an increased number of scenarios for larger party sizes: There are currently seven players in my group, some of whom have two PCs! Yes, I know it would be simple to decrease the number of PCs, increase the number of opponents (or their Hit Dice), or even use a higher-level scenario. However, this can lead to inconsistencies and imbalances within the plot, among other things.

Nigel Espley
West Midlands, UK

Every one of our published contributors has a file containing proposals, acceptance letters, revision requests, and rejection letters. The files are kept in two black desk drawers in my office cubicle, and they are confidential. However, I can give you some statistics from the "Chris Perkins" file: 74 adventure proposals, 52 polite rejections, 23 letters of acceptance, and 30 revision requests. Only three times did the editor buy one of the adventures without requesting at least some revision; for the record, those adventures were "The Bandits of Bunglewood" (Issue #51), "Avenging Murik" (Issue #66), and "Uzaglu of the Underdark" (Issue #67). There were three revision requests for "North of Narborel" (Issue #49) and two for "Horror's Harvest" (Issue #38). "Gnome Droppings" (Issue #63) was rejected by one editor and accepted by another (which is why the numbers above don't quite add up).

Here's a short list of the most frequently submitted (and often rejected) adventure premises:

- *Necromancers summoning or creating undead creatures;*
- *Heroes searching for an artifact;*
- *Deranged wizards conducting "foul experiments" in towers;*
- *The search for someone's kidnapped son or daughter;*
- *Gates to the Lower Planes;*
- *A supposed benefactor who is, in fact, a doppleganger with sinister ulterior motives;*
- *Evil wizards doing evil things for no apparent reason except that they're evil;*
- *A haunted house;*
- *A house that everyone thinks is haunted but really isn't;*
- *A murder mystery in which the culprit is a doppleganger, a lycanthrope, a vampire, or some other evil shapeshifter;*
- *Evil wizards who are misunderstood;*
- *Adventures that begin in a tavern.*

I have my own secret "wish list," but I'd prefer to hear what kinds of adventures our readers want to see. Write to us and let us know! Rest assured, our contributors are listening ...

SPELLJAMMER Aficionado

I have been a fan of your magazine for some time (I even won a subscription several years ago), and it is still an invaluable aid when the duties of being a DM are thrust upon me.

I was pleased when the SPELLJAMMER setting finally saw the light of day in Issue #71's "Wildspawn," even if it was in an indirect way. The SPELLJAMMER campaign is one of my favorite settings, and the spelljamming modules in *DUNGEON Adventures* have always been better than most of the separately produced adventures. I encourage you to publish more spelljamming material. I think that one adventure a year would not be too intrusive for the regular readership.

I have noticed that several adventures have been published in the last year or two that are very specific, with sidebars to convert them to a more generic setting. I think that this is a very good idea and leads me to ask: If I submitted a SPELLJAMMER adventure with conversions to a generic nautical adventure, would this be acceptable? I ask this because there seems to be some reluctance to publish SPELLJAMMER material, and I hope that this trend can be changed.

I would also like to comment on the topic of series adventures. I think that they are an interesting idea, but if they last for more that two or three parts, few DMs will want to wait that long for the conclusion. I think you should let the magazine keep its current format and publish a seventh issue that contains a serial campaign.

Kurt Spearing
Portage, WI
spearin1@pilot.msu.edu

Everyone has a favorite campaign setting. However, the majority of our readers prefer AD&D adventures that can be dropped into their particular campaigns with minimal effort. If you are designing a setting-specific adventure, you might include a sidebar that briefly details how the module should be modified to suit more generic campaign worlds. Given our space constraints, the fewer modifications that are required, the better the adventure's chance of acceptance.

SPELLJAMMER adventures are difficult to adapt to other settings. Our two most recent offerings ("Gnome Droppings" in Issue #63 and "Wildspawn" in Issue #71) sidestepped the problem by remaining planet-bound, but there are other possibilities. An adventure set on the Rock of Bral, for instance, could easily be modified to suit a terrestrial port city like Waterdeep, Mirros (Specularum), or the Free City of Greyhawk. A pirate base hidden in an asteroid belt could be relocated to an island archipelago.

continued on page 84

Evan and Lythia enjoy an evening's tranquillity.

NON-PROPHET ORGANIZATION

BY CHARLES C. REED

What dreams may come

Artwork by Matthew Mitchell
Cartography by Diesel

Charles and his wife Jeannette were recently married at a bed-and-breakfast inn located in Cape May, New Jersey. Charles also recently completed his Ph.D. in structural biology.

"Non-Prophet Organization" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 characters of levels 4–7 (about 27 total levels). It includes town, wilderness, and dungeon settings, and it can be placed in any sparsely settled region near a river. The characters are pitted against a clever covey of hags who are plotting the ruin of a small village.

For the Dungeon Master

A covey of hags (two greenhags and an annis) has recently set up housekeeping near the town of Kellorville. The hags have scouted the town through magic (via their *change self* ability) and enacted a ploy to dupe the townsfolk right into their filthy, taloned hands.

Appearing as a normal maiden, one of the hags (Lythia) sought out Evan Jakobs, a reclusive and odd townie who is a local tinkerer and handyman. She befriended him, and they met several times for picnics. He was totally taken with this woman, as nobody had given him this much attention before. Lythia gave Evan her brooch as a token of affection (actually a *hag eye amulet*) and made him promise not to tell anyone about it. It was "their little secret." One or two townsfolk noticed Evan meeting with his sweetheart in the afternoons but thought he was just meeting with a local maid from one of the outlying farms. People gossip, however, and the whole town soon knew about Evan's acquaintance.

The covey began to send Evan visions as he slept using their *dream* spell ability. At first the dreams were innocuous, containing the maiden and pleasant messages of friendship and trust. Later dreams became more menacing, and in one the maiden foretold her own drowning at the nearby river and begged Evan for help. He rushed down to the water and found only her hat and an empty boat, apparently arriving too late to save her. He ran back to town for help. Jeb Olstedd (area **1**) and the Mossminders (area **4**) listened to his story and offered their aid, but even after rowing around on the river for the entire night and half

the following morning, they found nothing. They asked around the outlying farms but could not find anyone who knew of Lythia. They weren't sure what to make of this, but they knew their friend Evan was distraught. The whole setup left Evan confused and depressed, just as the hags planned.

The hags have continued sending Evan dreams. In them, Lythia (in maiden form) tells Evan not to be sad, because she will always be there in his dreams. She has hinted that a grave disaster is approaching the village and that only he can help the townsfolk survive. The hags have actually staged two local disasters in the past four days (a crop blight courtesy of a *wand of frost* and a barn fire), after warning Evan of them. Their warnings were cryptic. The first stated that "winter would visit the valley early," and the second said, "flames would eat your lifeblood." At first, people didn't believe Evan's warnings of catastrophe, but as his prophecies began to come true, people stopped laughing and started listening. The hags' plan is to use their magic to make a large-scale disaster appear imminent and have Evan miraculously save the town by leading the folk to the only place of safety: the hags' tunnels! The townsfolk will come with their valuables in tow and with complete confidence in Evan's abilities.

The adventurers arrive just as Evan is beginning to be taken seriously. They could enter the scenario simply by stopping at the town for the night, or they could have heard about Evan's ability to foretell the future (probably greatly exaggerated, as he has only "foreseen" three things in the past week) from a fellow traveler on the road. Descriptions of the village and surrounding countryside are given first, followed by a timeline of possible events. The last part of the adventure describes the hags' lair and their actions if the PCs foil their schemes.

Kellorville

Kellorville is a small village of about 160 people, mostly human but with a few halflings. The village primarily subsists on farming and shepherding, although several people also make a nice profit fishing for eels, a local delicacy. Being located near a navigable river has proven useful to the town, as wool merchants have an easy time exporting their purchases. The town has little trouble with monsters, although the townsfolk know that the forest east of town holds a pack of owlbears (area **16**). There is also a flock of stirges in the wooded hills north of town (area **26**). These beasts have not left the forest in years, however. There is no mayor, but a town council (consisting of the leading citizens) meets every week at the Rumbling Belly (area **1**). Roads are gravel or dirt, but well-maintained. The DM should be familiar with the local area (areas **15–22**) in addition to the town descriptions, as many local personalities have access to that knowledge and could inform the PCs.

1. The Rumbling Belly. This tavern and inn is owned by Jeb Olstedd, a former soldier whose career was ended early by an encounter with a *sword of sharpness*. (He'll tell the story if somebody buys him a pint of ale.) He has only one leg but manages well with either his crutch or a wooden peg leg. He does most of the cooking and brewing on site and hires several local youths to clean and serve tables. The place is a decent, clean establishment, and no brawling, swearing, or rude behavior is tolerated.

The house specialty is braised eel for 5 sp. Other dishes, including broiled fish and the soup or stew of the day, cost 2–10 sp. Ales cost 1–6 sp, or a PC can buy the 20-sp yard, served from what Jeb claims to be a genuine salamander horn. He has only one coppery-colored horn, which has been hollowed out to serve as a multi-pronged drinking mug. This salamander horn was given to him by an adventurer years ago and would fetch over 500 gp from a wizard or alchemist.

Jeb's six rooms on the second floor each sleep two comfortably and cost 10 sp per night. Hot water for a bath costs an additional 5 sp. The stable out back can be used to keep horses for 2 sp per day. Being the largest building in town, the inn is used for town council meetings and is considered the "local hangout" every evening. From 2–24 local folk are here each night, as well as 1–6 travelers (mostly merchants). The recent happenings with Evan have left Jeb worried. He believes Evan's stories and thinks people should pay more attention to them. Jeb wants to hear more of what Evan has to say, but he is afraid of looking foolish in front of other townsfolk.

Jeb Olstedd, human male F2: AC 10; MV 6; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+3 for Strength); Str 18/05, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 11; SZ M; ML 14; AL LG; crutch, footman's mace (kept under the bar).

2. Beaching Area. This gravelly space is where most boats arriving in town come ashore. At any time, from 2–12 boats are beached here, in addition to several rafts. The homes directly by the shore all house local fishing families, who would be willing to ferry adventurers around for a few silvers or rent them a boat for their own use for a few gold pieces. All boats have oars and a makeshift sail.

The fishing families all have keys to the warehouses (area **3**).

3. Storehouses. These two large buildings have small windows and sliding doors that are locked. Keys are kept at areas **2**, **5**, and **6**. The buildings contain woolen cloth (made in town) along with other important supplies (pitch to repair the boats, a few extra sails, oars, barrels of smoked eel, and so forth).

The villagers allow PCs to explore the warehouses, but anyone caught breaking in is viewed with suspicion and asked to leave town.

4. Malabee's Provisions. Malabee Mossminder, a halfling, and his wife Marilynn run the general store in town. While they mainly provide farming, fishing, and shearing supplies, most other common items can be purchased at prices listed in the *PH*.

The Mossminders are friendly and talkative, freely sharing any local gossip. They helped Evan when he believed his girlfriend Lythia had drowned in the river. They questioned several folk both in town and in the outlying farms, but they were unable to learn who Lythia was or where she was staying; however, they are continuing their search and have hired local children to run messages to the more distant farms.

Malabee and **Marilynn Mossminder, 0-level halflings**: AC 10; MV 6; hp 6, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ S; ML 10; AL LG; dagger or throwing knife.

5. Osborne Sheep Farm. The Osborne family owns the largest single herd of sheep in town. They hire many people as shepherds and general farmhands.

> A large sign at the roadside proclaims this the Osborne farm. Sheep are apparently raised here, as you can see nothing else. The barn in the back was recently on fire, as the scorch marks attest. Nothing else appears damaged.

While they are the largest business in town, the Osbornes live in a simple house. Aben (41 years old) and his sons, Orwin (17 years old) and Alec (12 years old), spend most of their time herding sheep and performing chores, while Aben's wife, Bethie (37 years old), and their daughter, Mara (16 years old), work on spinning, weaving, and tailoring. They put up travelers for the night in their tool shed/storage barn in return for a day's work or 5 sp. Boarders are given one home-cooked meal in the morning.

Aben is a leading citizen. He and Sharyna (area **10**) jointly chair the town council. Aben is honest to a fault, and he is a skeptical man. He doesn't give the rumors about Evan much credence, despite the fact that it was his barn that was nearly burned down! He attributes the fire to a lantern left open by a careless worker and has already admonished the hired help. The truth is that a torch hurled by an ogre set the barn ablaze.

The Osbornes keep their life savings (over 2,500 gp in mixed coins) in a small locked chest hidden in the basement. Young Mara has a crush on Stanner, the miller's hand (area **10**).

Aben and **Bethie Osborne, 0-level humans**: AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 13; AL LG; knife, staff, or rolling pin.

Orwin, **Mara**, and **Alec Osborne, 0-level humans**: hp 5, 3, 3; other statistics same as above. They are unarmed.

6. Communal Farm. This farm is owned by several families in town. All work is shared and all profits divided equally.

> Several chickens scatter from your path as you approach the farm. There are people at work by the barn, as well as in the fields and in small plots close by. The braying of a mule in the barn brings shouts of frustration from some young lad trying to get the stubborn animal into a yoke.

While this farm has fewer sheep than the Osborne homestead, the communal farm also produces barley and corn in fantastic quantities. The barn also houses several cows, goats, and chickens. Several mules inhabit one end of the barn and bray loudly day or night if the barn is approached. Small plots around the acreage also grow herbs, potatoes, and other seasonal crops.

At any time during the day, from 2–7 people (0-level) are working here. They direct PCs who inquire about Evan to the Rumbling Belly (area **1**) or Evan himself (area **12**). They are generally afraid of Evan's prophecies, as a large patch of barley was ruined by frost (not a common occurrence in summer). The patch is about 100 yards from the road and covers a roughly circular, 80' diameter area. No tracks seemed to lead to or from the affected area, although the area is criss-crossed with tracks now. The hags destroyed the barley with a *wand of frost* and hid their tracks using their *pass without trace* abilities.

7. Smithy. The local smith, Dalvan Grames, resides and works here. He concentrates on mundane chores: shoeing, making farm tools, and so forth. He can repair metal armor or weapons 50% of the time, charging an amount equal to 10–40% of the item's original cost.

8. Temple of Chauntea. This temple, dedicated to the goddess of earth and agriculture, is a simple wooden building with a stone foundation. Plants grow in abundance around and inside it. (While Chauntea is a FORGOTTEN REALMS® deity, the DM should feel free to substitute another earth or farming deity worshiped in the campaign.)

Beryl, Daughter of Obyl, is the resident cleric. She is a well-respected member of the community, quiet and reserved at most council meetings. She is 29 years old with long brown hair pulled back in a braid. Beryl never speaks rashly and chooses her words carefully. She often makes day-long trips through the area, tending to local farmers and helping the people any way she can. She is the closest thing to a judge in the area, and if she felt the need to try anyone for a crime, the locals would quickly endorse her.

Beryl has thought a great deal about Evan, and despite her intelligence and magic, she is still unsure of his agenda. She knows that Evan is not under a *charm* and that he is not evil. (She has cast *detect charm* and *know alignment* on him without his knowledge.) So far, Evan's amulet has escaped her notice, although a *detect magic* spell would certainly reveal its magical nature. If Evan continues with his prophecies, she plans to confront him directly and request an explanation which, unfortunately, he cannot provide.

Beryl, Daughter of Obyl, human female C4: AC 8; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16; ML 15; AL NG; *quarterstaff +1, ring of protection +2*, sling, clerical scroll (*dispel magic, cure disease,* and *cure serious wounds* cast at 7th level).

Spells (5/4): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×2), *detect poison, locate animals or plants, protection from evil*; 2nd—*augury, barkskin, know alignment, speak with animals.*

9. Vacant House. This four-room house is currently unoccupied. PCs can stay here if they agree to pay the town council 5 gp per week. There is some old but serviceable furniture here, and the structure is secure, having no broken shutters or holes. Characters are directed to the temple (area **8**) or the Rumbling Belly (area **1**) if they inquire about the real estate. Jeb or Beryl are both authorized to conduct the deal.

10. Banabar's Mill. This large mill and house belong to Sharyna Banabar, a well-to-do middle-aged businesswoman who inherited her wealth from her parents—both former adventurers. They discour-

aged Sharyna to follow in their footsteps and instead set up this mill as a family business. She took to the trade well and is now the most prosperous person in town. She has three hands who work there year round, all local boys who are hard workers. One of them, Stanner, is in love with Mara Osborne (area 4).

Sharyna not only grinds grain but also saws wood. Every summer, she hires 2–5 nearby woodsmen (who carefully avoid the owlbears in the forest) to move logs downstream and cut them here. Sharyna stores most of her grain in the mill itself and will even kiln it for brewers. Much of her money is safely in a bank in a larger city downstream, but she keeps 1,750 gp worth of mixed coins in a locked secret compartment in the basement (guarded by a *fire trap* that causes 1d4+8 points of damage). She also has five gems (worth 50 gp each) sewn into the lining of one of her cloaks.

Sharyna is shrewd when it comes to business dealings and always gets her fair share. She wants to think Evan is telling the truth, but her business instinct says something is fishy.

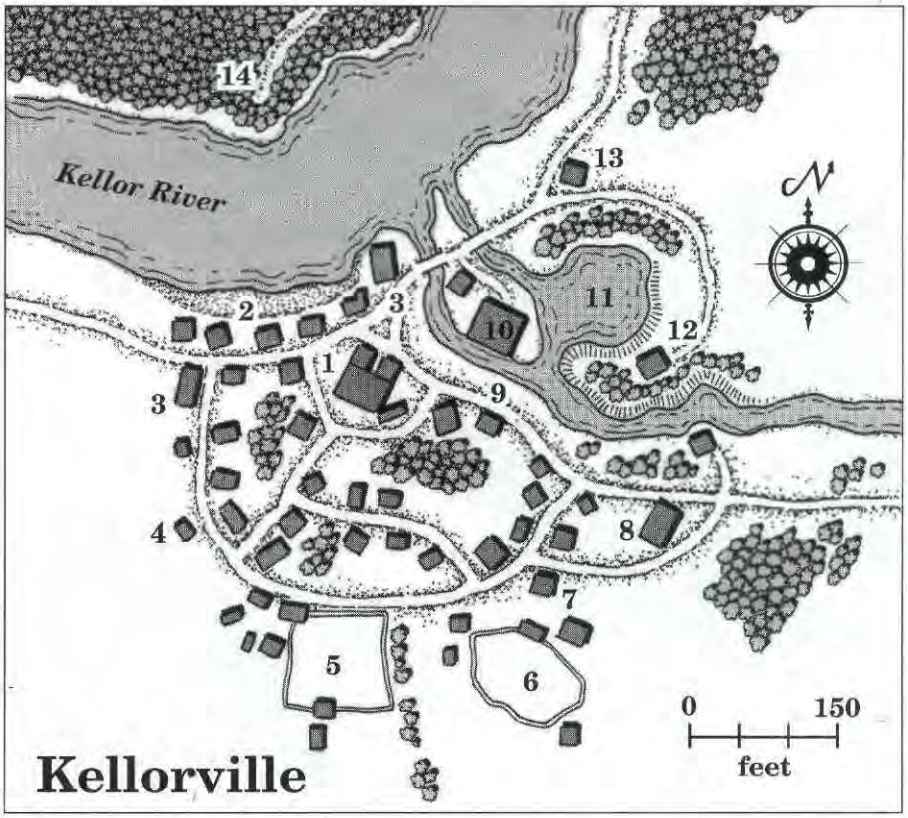
Sharyna Banabar, 0-level human female: AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; ML 12; AL LG; knife.

Stanner Ryan, 0-level human male: AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1; Str 16, roll 2d4+6 for other ability scores; ML 13; AL LG; knife, spear, shortbow.

11. Fish Pond. This pond is about 25 feet deep in the center. On the northern shore, a rope tied to a tree can be used to swing out over the pond.

12. Evan's House. Evan Jakobs lives alone here in a small but sturdy wood-frame house located on a steep hill about 60 feet above the pond. The front porch has several rocking chairs, and a bell hanging from a post by the trail can be rung to announce visitors.

The house has three rooms: a living room/kitchen, a cramped bedroom, and a workroom with a small porch opening off the back. The workroom has many woodworking tools, spools of wire, pots with holes in them, rakes, brooms, and so forth. Evan keeps the money he earns in a leather pouch under his bed. He currently has 530 cp, 755 sp, and 40 gp. He keeps 75 gp in a small, unlocked wooden box buried thirty paces behind his house.



Evan is the local tinkerer and handyman. He is tall, a bit overweight, and in his late twenties. He has unruly brown hair and a small mustache and beard. Evan is quiet and shy, and he has been all his life. He often travels and works at farms in the surrounding area.

Recent events have left him confused and open to suggestion (exactly what the hags intended). He was greatly upset at his inability to save Lythia but sees his current warnings to the town as a way to redeem himself. He firmly believes his sweetheart is giving him warnings from beyond the grave to help him save the townsfolk from calamity and does not question his dreams.

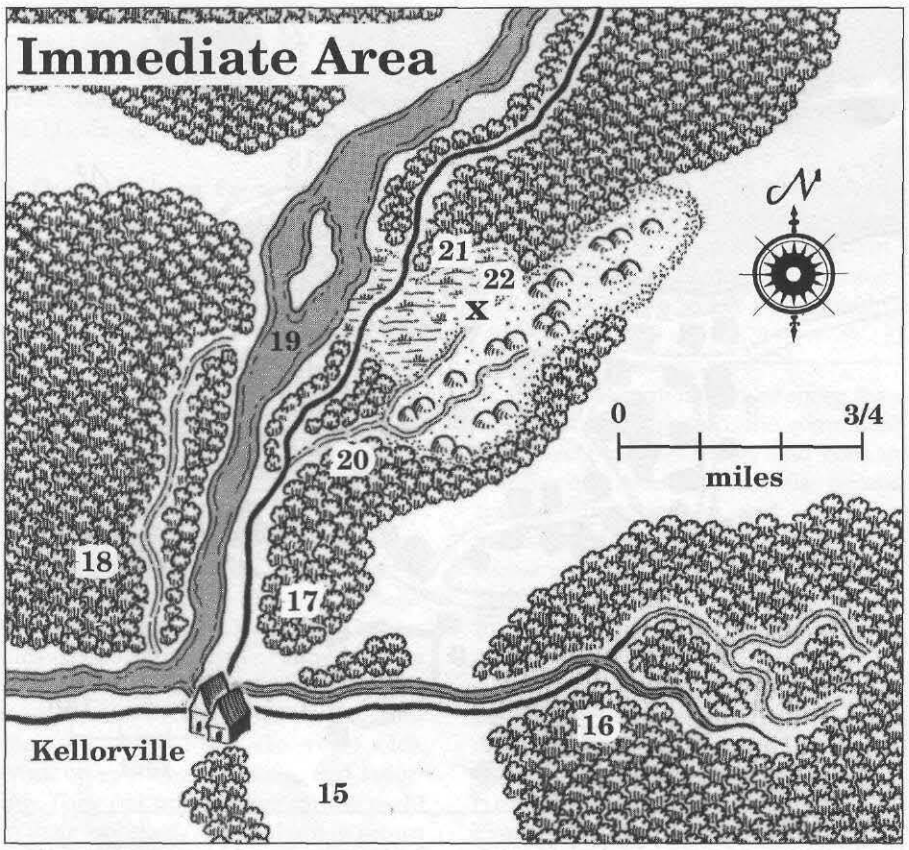
Evan can be found in the house about 50% of the time. At any time, even when he's not home, 0–6 people are waiting to speak to him. People are either inquiring about his health, showing moral support, or asking him about what will happen next. If not at home, he is wandering the town and could be anywhere in the vicinity. For information on Evan's visions, see "Course of Events" below. Evan is hesitant to speak to strangers and declines to talk at first. He will not knowingly submit to magical scrutiny and would be upset to find out that Beryl (whom he respects) has already cast two detection spells on him.

Evan Jakobs, 0-level human male: AC 10; MV 12; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; ML 13; AL CG.

Evan typically has a few silver pieces on his person, in addition to the *hag eye amulet*, which appears as a small, cheap gem set in unremarkable silverwork. He has received a few compliments on it.

13. Tannery.

> Your nose tells you that this is the tannery. From inside you hear a loud voice complaining about the sad state of apprentices these days. As you observe further, you notice that several pieces of work displayed on the porch seem to be of high quality.



Labgum Morrel, Kellorville's 34-year-old tanner, has run off no fewer than three apprentices in the past year with his yelling and constant complaining, but his work is good. He can repair leather armor or fashion standard leather goods in one-third less time than usual. He also charges an extra 20%, but the quality is worth it. He tolerates Evan and the other villagers but gets along well only with Beryl, who puts him in his place. Labgum does not believe in Evan's prophecies. He thinks that Evan is either mad or causing the trouble himself.

Labgum Morrel, 0-level human male: AC 10; MV 12; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; ML 11; AL NG; staff, dagger.

14. Treehouses. The children from town often play on the far side of the river in a huge set of treehouses. Several ropes and swings allow one to swing out over the water. Often one of the fishermen ferries young children over for a pebble or some other token payment. A trail runs though the woods to the island upriver (area **19**).

Immediate Area

The immediate area around the town is light forest, open pasture, and hills. The caves north of town (areas **23–42**) are a series of tunnels that once connected to a small keep on the hill, now long gone. Only a few ruined bits of wall remain. Most townsfolk know about the ruined walls, as they afford a nice view of the river, but nobody knows of the caves. People avoid the ruins at night, and rumors of ghosts abound, although such stories are mainly intended to scare small children. The truth of the matter, which all adults in town know, is that a flock of stirges inhabits that area and hunts there at night.

At night, in the forest north of town or in the hills, there is a 1-in-6 chance per hour of a wandering encounter. Use the following table (roll 1d8):

1. Stirges (2–12): See area **26**. They are simply out hunting.

2. Merrow (1–3): See "The Covey and Company" sidebar. These aquatic ogres are either foraging or conducting a mission for the hags. They fight only if the odds are in their favor, otherwise escaping to water as rapidly as possible.

3–6. Normal animals. These are regular animals conforming to the "mammal, small" descriptions in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL*™ tome, page 224.

7. Crystal oozes (1–3): AC 8; MV 1; HD 4; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA paralyzation, surprise; SD immune to some attacks; SZ M; ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/278. These oozes live in the swamp and are hunting for dinner.

8. Greenhag. One of the hags, either Lythia or Gordelly, is scouting the area. (See "The Covey and Company" sidebar for statistics.) If she is aware of the PCs, she approaches invisibly and uses *pass without trace* to hide her tracks, observing the characters from a safe distance for 1–3 rounds. She then uses *audible glamer* and *dancing lights* to create a will o'wisp or torchlight effect and sounds of mumbling in the opposite direction from her before quietly sneaking away. If discovered, the hag becomes invisible and flees as rapidly as possible to the water, where she can make a more effective escape.

Encounters Outside Kellorville

15. Pastures. Several herds of sheep, goats, and cows are raised in these pastures. Vegetable gardens and fruit trees are scattered among the grazing plots. Several shepherds are always on duty. All hag activity has been conducted under the cover of magic and darkness, so the shepherds have seen nothing out of the ordinary.

16. Evergreen Forest. This forest is the home of an owlbear pack. The owlbears normally lurk over a mile deep in the woods, but the hags have encountered them and, using *speak with monsters*, have convinced them to stalk the outer perimeters of the woods. If PCs investigate the woods, they have a 1-in-4 chance of an encounter every hour. There is a 30% chance that the PCs encounter 2–4 woodsmen (0-level humans) looking for quality trees to fell, and a 70% chance that they encounter 2–5 owlbears. The woodsmen know about the owlbears and are adept at avoiding them. Their strategy is simple but effective: They run like mad at the first sign of something

big moving toward them. They know the woods well enough to avoid potential pitfalls. Assume that each woodsman has the Survival—Forest and Tracking proficiencies.

Owlbears (2–5): AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 24 each; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12; SA hug; SZ L; ML 12; INT low (6); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/284.

17. Mixed Forest. The woods north of town contain mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. Parts of the forest have dense undergrowth. The ground grows damp and swampy toward the north.

The road through the swamp is often built up on pilings. The swamp contains many small streams and creeks running from the steep hillside to the Kellor River.

18. North Bank. This small trail wends through the northern woods. Once the adventure is underway, searches conducted in this area have a noncumulative 20% chance per hour of revealing 2–8 wandering skeletons. The skeletons are moving through the woods, disturbing local wildlife and making noise by hitting bushes and trees. See "Course of Events" for details of how the hags employ the skeletons.

Skeletons (2–8): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (by weapon type); SD immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; immune to cold, paralysis, poison, and death magic; suffers half damage from edged weapons; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/315.

19. Island. This island is a mass of tangled undergrowth. Hidden on the upstream side are the remains of several carts and wagons belonging to unfortunate victims the hags caught wandering on the road at night. One cart belongs to Tamarin Needlecrafter, a female gnome seamstress who was kidnapped by the scrags and now makes Mentonia's clothing. She is being held in area **40**.

20. Trail to Hilltop. The trail to the hilltop is overgrown, and if its location is not known, a successful Tracking proficiency check is required to spot it. Most people in town can tell the characters where to search for it, affording a +3 bonus to their Tracking rolls. The trail to the caves is even smaller and more overgrown and is detected as a secret door. It skirts the hillside and the swamp and is washed out in places. The hillside facing the swamp is steep and overgrown, making it difficult to search.

21. Swamp. Several streams from the swamp empty into the river, providing the hags, merrow, and scrags with easy access to the caves. Mosquitoes infest this area, and a few crystal oozes lurk in its depths, emerging only at night. Many birds and other wildlife live here, despite the stirge flock. Disquieting sounds like croaking frogs, squawking birds, and movement in the undergrowth can be heard at all hours.

22. Ruined Wall. Taking the trail to its end leads PCs to the ruined walls of an old keep, marked with an **X** on the map.

> Before you stands the ruins of a stone enclosure. Only a few feet of curtain wall and a bit of rounded wall, possibly from a tower, remain standing. The view from the hilltop, however, is quite good, and despite the overcast sky, you can see for a good distance. No piece of stonework here stands higher than a few feet.

A successful Tracking proficiency check reveals large humanoid tracks in the area, but recent bad weather makes following them to their source impossible. Skeletal tracks can also be located.

Searching about 100 yards from the wall reveals several shallow holes dug in the ground within the past month; these graves date back to the keep's time, and their former occupants have since been used as subjects of the hags' *animate dead* spells. About a quarter mile southeast of the ruined keep, a rocky outcropping, one of many in the area, conceals a secret door leading to area **42**. This entrance, like area **23** below, is covered by a *veil* spell, appearing to be just rocky terrain. The door is made of stone and difficult to open from the outside. A Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll or a *knock* spell is needed. The hags use this entrance but hide their tracks using *pass without trace* spells.

Course of Events

The following timeline describes actions and events as they occur in the days following the characters' arrival. Actions by the PCs could easily alter events, so the DM should be creative when necessary. Remember that the hags can observe what is happening via the *hag eye* currently in Evan's possession. If the PCs foil the covey's schemes in town, the hags might cause them extra trouble. (See the "Covey Options" section for ideas.) The DM is encouraged to use the timeline only as a rough guide.

PCs uncovering evidence of what is causing these disasters, like spotting the merrow, detecting spells in effect, or uncovering the *hag eye*, would bolster the town's courage.

Day Minus 24, Daytime: Evan meets Lythia.

Day Minus 10, Night: Evan receives his first prophetic dream. Lythia apparently disappears on the river that same night. Rescue attempts turn up nothing.

Day Minus 7, Night: Evan dreams of a crop blight. He tells the farmers, who do not listen.

Day Minus 6, Night: Hags use their *wand of frost* to ravage the barley crop.

Day Minus 4, Daytime: The crop damage is discovered. Several locals are amazed at Evan's warning, while others are suspicious.

Day Minus 4, Night: Evan dreams about fire.

Day Minus 3, Daytime: Evan tells Jeb and Beryl about his dream. Beryl attempts her magic detections.

Day Minus 3, Night: A fire is started in Aben Osborne's barn.

Day Minus 2, Night: Evan is warned that something bad will occur soon, but nothing specific is revealed. He tells nobody about this.

Day Minus 1, Night: Lythia warns Evan that the miller must put her grain on a higher shelf.

Day 0, Daytime: Evan tells Sharyna about his vision. She gets suspicious and has Stanner watch Evan to be sure these prophesied events aren't just Evan's own handiwork. She locks the doors to her grain stores (on the ground floor of the mill). Sharyna goes to the Rumbling Belly and tells Jeb about the warning.

Once the PCs arrive in town, they can learn about the recent happenings, either through direct questioning or by listening to local gossip. If they gain Jeb's confidence, he reveals the most recent prophecy about the mill. Sharyna might also tell PCs about the mill vision if they agree to do something about it (like figure out what Evan's prophecy means). Talking with Evan proves difficult and unfulfilling. Evan is hesitant to speak to strangers about his recent visions unless they are accompanied by a known and trusted townsperson who is sympathetic. He knows as little as everyone else—he has had a few dreams where he is told of upcoming problems.

Stanner is hanging out by Evan's house all day, keeping an eye on him.

Day 0, Night: A fog rolls in (via a *control weather* spell), and two merrow (see "The Covey and Company") swim to the mill stream and fish pond and partially block the outlets with debris (leaves, branches, and mud scooped out from the riverbank upstream or from the immediate area). They do not build a huge mound of debris that sticks above the waterline, only a small pile that remains hidden under the surface. The fish pond overflows during the next hour, and water leaks into the ground floor of the mill, ruining quite a few sacks of grain and making a real mess. Anyone inside of the mill notices nothing wrong until water begins to leak in!

Guarding the front entrance to the mill gives PCs a 10% chance to hear debris being placed under the bridge by the fish pond's outlet or millstream. (Thieves may use their Detect Noise ability instead.) Guarding the millstream affords a +10% bonus to hear debris being placed, and specifically watching the stream affords a +20% bonus.

The merrow are camouflaged and can become effectively 80% invisible when immersed in the water. If found, the merrow flee, swimming upriver to their lair. The debris washes away naturally after two hours. That night, Evan has a dream in which Lythia warns him of creatures from the east. She tells Evan to warn folk to stay indoors tomorrow.

Day 1, Daytime: The weather is cloudy and foggy (courtesy of a *control weather* spell). Evan's mill vision is made public. A town meeting is be held at the Rumbling Belly, with all major citizens in attendance. In the meeting, Evan tells about his latest dream. People listen closely. Arguments ensue, with people split over Evan's ability. Evidence of the merrow could influence opinions against Evan; someone could even declare that he's in league with those water fiends! Despite any opposition, Evan forcefully states that everyone should stay inside today, as something bad is coming from the east. Further questioning of Evan reveals that something even bigger and worse is on the way, but he doesn't know what it is yet.

Later that day, rain begins and a series of loud bellows is heard from the east end of the village. Out of the rain and fog charge six owlbears (from area **16**). They run right into the village at the same time as Beryl is walking out of the temple to investigate the noise. She is shocked to see the monsters but does not hesitate to defend herself with staff or spell. The owlbears have been enraged by the hags and goaded into attacking the town after being driven from the forest. Tracking the owlbears back to the forest is difficult due to the rain. Casting *detect magic* at the wood's edge reveals the lingering effects of two *pass without trace* spells (cast by the hags), both trailing north. Rain removes any traces of mundane tracks once the PCs reach the hills.

Owlbears (6): AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 28, 24, 23 (×3), 20; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–12; SA hug; SZ L; ML 12; INT low (5); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/284.

Day 1, Night: Evan receives a dream where Lythia warns him that the cold and rain will sap the strength of anyone abroad tomorrow.

Day 2, Daytime: The day is cloudy and rainy, courtesy of the hags' *control weather* spell. Strange sounds and animal calls are heard coming from the far bank near one of the treehouses (see area **14**) and from wooded areas in town (the result of an *audible glamer* spell cast by an invisible hag lurking in the woods). The blacksmith and 2–8 other townspeople out in the rain are struck with a strange bout of *weakness*, caused by another hag walking through town under the cover of a *change self* spell. PCs have a hard time locating her, even if they are somehow aware that a covey of hags is responsible for the town's recent problems. Only constant vigilance with magical detections could spot the hag. Upon completing her task, she turns invisible and leaves town, causing further distractions with *audible glamer* or *dancing lights*, if need be.

Day 2, Night: Evan has a dream in which Lythia tells him that evil gathers against the town, and the townsfolk must flee soon. Lythia tells him that the skeptical leatherworker will learn the error of his ways.

Day 3, Daytime: The morning is foggy. The fog is particularly thick around the northern part of town (thanks to a *fog cloud* spell). Evan rushes to Labgum to warn him, then goes to the Rumbling Belly and asks Jeb to call another town meeting. Jeb tries to calm Evan down.

That morning, Labgum's tannery is attacked by fourteen zombies created by the hags' *animate dead* spells. The zombies emerge from the river and converge on the shop. They begin pounding on the doors and windows, gaining entry in 5 rounds. Labgum yells for help and prepares to defend himself with a pair of large shears (Dmg 1d6). With luck, the PCs are nearby. After the attack, Labgum, if he survives, listens to Evan's every word. He was skeptical, but the zombie raid made him a believer. People in town now fear to leave their homes. The few people who go outside have weapons at the ready.

The strange sounds in the woods continue, now accomplished by stirring up the local animal life with several wandering zombies and skeletons. PCs can track and slay the undead, but little new information can be gained.

Zombies (14): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 11 (×3), 9 (×9), 6, 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; immune to cold, poison, paralysis, and death magic; SW always attack last in melee; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/373.

Day 3, Night: Evan receives his final warning from Lythia: An ancient curse will destroy the town very soon. The folk are doomed, as a huge storm and fell beasts shall overrun the river valley. Only hiding in a secret cave north of

Undead horrors advance with the creeping fog.

town will save them. She tells Evan to lead the townsfolk to the caves tomorrow and keep them safe from harm.

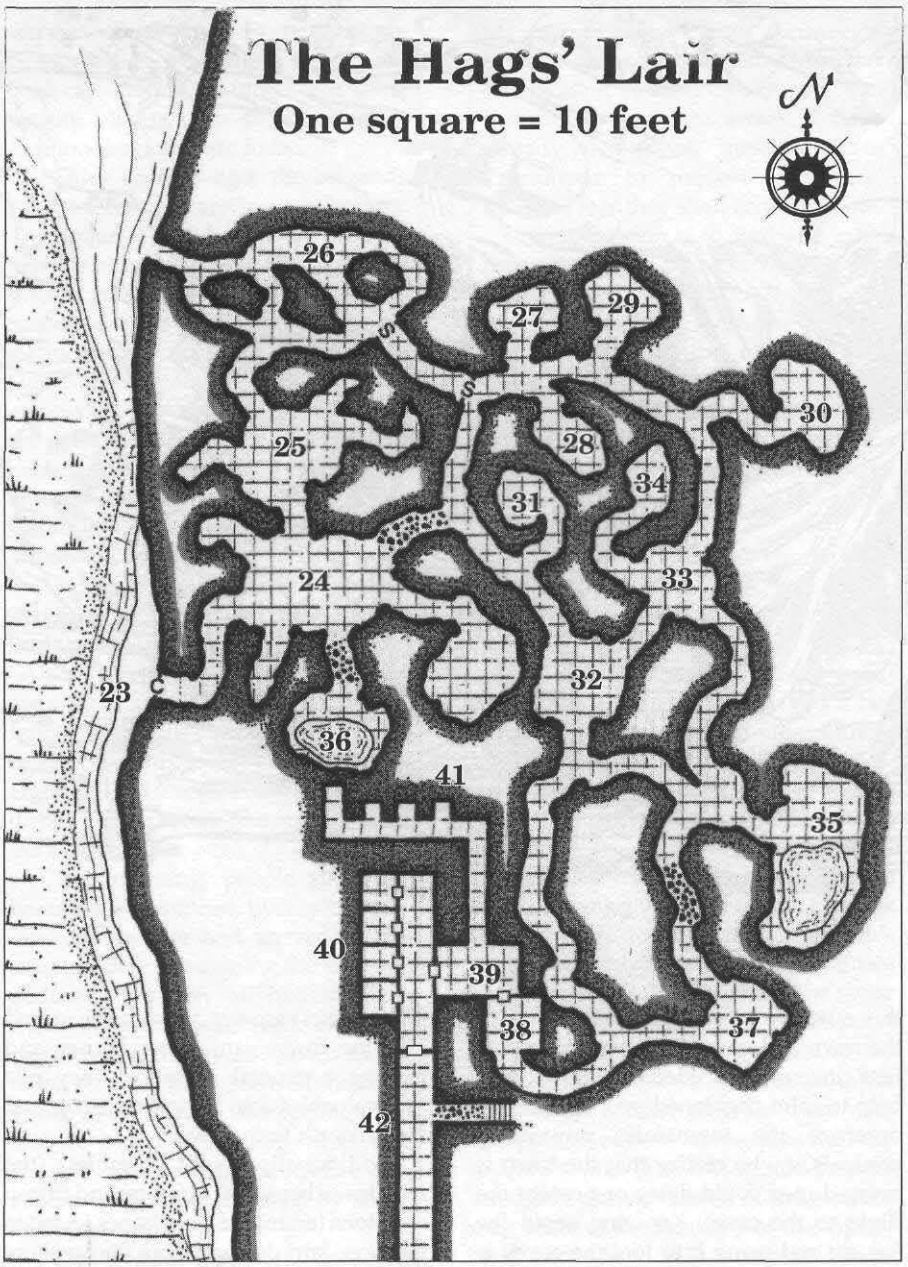
Day 4, Daytime: The weather is rainy. Thunder and lightning begin by midmorning. A town meeting is held at 10:00 A.M. The mood is gloomy. Most of the townsfolk are worried that some disaster is near. Evan confirms this feeling and insists that everyone leave town and hide. He offers to lead them to safety by taking them to a place north of town and waiting out this "evil curse." People agree, and a mob mentality begins to take over. Most of the townsfolk begin bundling their precious belongings, including herds of sheep and goats, and head north with Evan, who leads the way. He is evasive about where he is going but can be persuaded by someone he trusts to tell about the hidden cave in the hills that Lythia described. Note that character actions could greatly influence this outcome. PCs who were helpful to the town and gained the trust of important citizens are heeded, and they could help to calm frightened people or better organize the townsfolk, preventing panic. PCs who realize that the town is being duped could delay or prevent the flight to the caves. Knowing about the *hag eye* and using it to fool the covey is another ploy. The PCs could feed the covey false information and surprise the hags as they make ready for the villagers.

If the flight to the caves occurs, people follow Evan to the cave at area **24**. (See "Covey Options" below for details on events at the cave.) About 120 people from the village accompany Evan, the rest fleeing in other directions. Anyone remaining in town after the meeting sees the weather deteriorate into a fierce thunderstorm with winds and even hail at noon. During the storm, three scrags (see "The Covey and Company" sidebar for statistics) emerge from the river and raid the town, ransacking houses and making a general nuisance. They pile any valuables into a stolen wagon and haul it north to the cave.

Additionally, eight zombies (the remains of hapless wayfarers) and fifteen skeletons (animated from bones found in the hags' lair) descend from the far shore and wander through town, causing damage and attacking any who remain. The raid lasts about four hours, the storm about six hours. Note that the scrags flee in the face of strong resistance, including massed townsfolk with torches, spears, scythes, pitchforks, and other farming implements. The undead fight until turned or destroyed.

Zombies (8): hp 10 (×2), 9 (×5), 6; see "Day 3, Daytime" for complete statistics.

Skeletons (15): hp 7, 6 (×6), 5 (×7), 4; see area **18** for complete statistics.



The Hags' Lair

The hags have made their lair in a series of caves north of town. The caves once connected to a small keep on the hilltop (now nothing but crumbling masonry). Ceiling height in the hags' lair ranges from 9–12 (1d4+8) feet in corridors and 16–25 (1d10+15) feet in caverns. The outer caves (areas **24** and **25**) are unlit, but the hag tunnels are lit at irregular intervals by sputtering torches that give off a bad odor as they burn.

23. Cave Entrance. The cave and trail are about 10 feet above the swamp. A *veil* spell conceals the entrance with an illusion of more steep hillside and tangled bushes. To better conceal the entrance to the caves, the hags use the water entrance (see areas **35** and **36**) whenever possible and their *pass without trace* spells otherwise. They remove the *veil* concealing the entrance only if they know the villagers are coming or if they are preparing a trap for the characters.

24. Main Cavern. This is where Evan leads the villagers should the hags' ploy succeed. Two passages are blocked by cave-ins requiring at least two hours of work, a *passwall* spell, or a *stone shape* spell to create a passable opening. With their strength and size, two hags could clear a passage in 1 turn. Several normal bats make their homes in crevices in the ceiling. Loud noises or excessive activity here has a 10% chance per turn of drawing the stirges from area **26**.

The tunnel leading eastward opens into an empty cave that the PCs can use as a place to rest and recuperate.

25. Empty Cave. Several passages branch off from the cave, most of them dead ends. The hags can use this cave as an ambush site. (See "Covey Options" below.) Loud noises or excessive activity here has a 25% chance per turn of attracting the stirges from area **26**.

26. Stirge Cave. Fifteen stirges inhabit this cave. They cling to the ceiling on the northern side of the cave, venturing out only at night to hunt. The exit from the cavern slopes up 45° and is covered with vegetation; from the hillside, it is treated as a concealed door. Anyone climbing in or out must make a Climb Walls check or fall, suffering 1d6 points of damage and disturbing the stirges (which could alert the hags if they are nearby).

The stirges do not bother characters unless disturbed. The stirges have no treasure. Two secret doors conceal the passage leading to the hags' lair. Each was constructed by the builders of the ruined keep and is opened by depressing a hidden plate in the nearby walls.

Stirges (15): AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1, hp 6 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 175, *MM*/332.

27. Gordelly's Cavern.

> This cave is tidy, but plain. A pile of straw sits along the far wall, behind several pieces of crude furniture. The floor is of hard-packed earth and stone. A bulging sack sits on a small table, and a leather-covered chest rests on the floor by the straw.

This is Gordelly's cave. The sack holds 1,100 sp and 250 gp. The chest holds one garnet (100 gp), five moonstones (50 gp), two tiger eye agates (10 gp), and a clerical scroll with *animal summoning I, animal summoning II, control wind,* and *cure serious wounds* cast at 10th-level. Gordelly knows the scroll is valuable and might use it to bargain with PCs for her escape, should things look grim.

28. Mentonia's Cavern.

This room is a riot of colors. Hanging from pegs on the walls is clothing of all shapes and styles. Fine silk scarves, linen dresses, fur cloaks, and cotton shawls are just a few of the objects that catch your eye. A full length mirror stands by the west wall, and a table next to it holds boxes of jewelry. A crude frame holds a mound of pillows, apparently acting as a bed. Everything is covered in clothing. Overhead, a lantern with colored glass provides flickering, multicolored light.

Mentonia's cave is filled with her clothing collection, about half of which actually fits. Sorting through the clothing requires at least 3 turns but nets over a dozen good silk dresses (20 gp each), five fur cloaks (25 gp each), eighteen scarves with fine stitching and embroidery (10 gp each), and scores of more mundane pieces of women's clothing, much of it oversized.

The table by the mirror has four boxes on it, each containing 50 gp worth of costume jewelry. An empty wand case made of leather and velvet (worth 20 gp) is buried under the pillows on the bed, along with a matching pair of leather purses containing 450 sp and 228 gp respectively. The brass lantern is a beautiful work of art with silver inlay and is worth 80 gp intact.

29. Lythia's Cave.

This cave is untidy, with several pieces of ruined furniture and bones scattered on the floor. A large pile of furs dominates the center of the room and is surrounded by coins and tattered clothes. On the east wall, a large stool sits in front of a wobbly table missing a leg.

Lythia's room is untidy and home to six pet osquips. They are sleeping in the moth-eaten furs but awaken and attack if anyone enters the room. If their morale fails, they dart into small burrows in the walls and do not return. Scattered through the furs are twenty-five polished ornamental stones (1 gp), 350 cp, and 700 sp. Lythia has several linen dresses (from Mentonia) carefully folded on the table for her travels in town as a human. Behind a rock on the west wall is a small niche (spotted as a secret door) containing a rotting leather sack with 23 pp.

Osquips (6): AC 0; MV 12, burrow ½; HD 3+1; hp 18, 17, 14 (×3), 13; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2–12; SZ S; ML 7; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 120; *MM*/300.

30. Shunned Cave. A faint odor of vinegar fills the passage leading to this cave. Surrounding the entrance to the cave is a massive stunjelly. The stunjelly attacks the first two characters entering the cave then moves across the entrance, blocking it. This creature has been fed by the hags and has grown to huge size. Note that it can attack twice per round. Suspended in the stunjelly's interior are 95 cp, 83 sp, 27 gp, and a silver dagger. The hags could lure victims in here with *audible glamer* or *dancing lights* spells.

Massive stunjelly: AC 8; MV 4; HD 6; hp 38; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/2–8; SA paralysis; SZ L; ML 9; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 975; *MM*/276 (modified).

31. Larder.

Several haunches of smoked meat hang here, along with dried fish and eels. The entire room has a faint smell of rotting fish. On the floor are sacks of wilted vegetables. A stack of small casks sits along the south wall.

This is the hags' larder. The casks contain a surprisingly good but rather fiery hard cider. The cidermaker's name (Sign of the Broken Brow) is stamped on each cask. Each cask is worth 10 gp.

32. Covey Chamber. This cavern is the covey's main gathering chamber. When not engaged in activities elsewhere, the hags are most likely here. If so, alter the description accordingly.

The tunnel opens into a smoky cave that smells of burnt food. Torches line the walls, casting a red-orange glow over the whole chamber. A small iron pot hangs above a mound of embrous coals by the east wall. Several large, crude chairs surround a round table. Several daggers and knives are stuck into the table's scarred surface. Also on the table is a large horn on a leather thong. The edges of the floor are littered with bones, and three chests sit against the western wall.

If encountered here, the hags defend themselves by hurling a chair or two (1d6 points of damage plus modifiers for Strength) and barricading one entrance with the table, possibly ramming one or more characters for 1d3 points of damage (plus any Strength bonuses). The pot of eel stew—a traditional goblin recipe—is another makeshift missile weapon, causing 1d6 points of damage (plus Strength bonus) when hurled, and an additional 1d3+1 points of damage due to the hot, scalding broth. Anyone struck by the stew must save vs. petrification or be blinded for 1–3 rounds. Should escape prove the better part of valor, the hags use a *fog cloud* spell followed by an *audible glamer* spell to confuse the sounds of their retreat.

The chests are made of wood. One contains four sacks with 1,700 cp, 1,682 sp, 323 gp, and 45 pp respectively. The second holds two boxes of rare perfumes (10 gp each), three bolts of embroidered cloth (30 gp each), and a successfully blended potion of *levitation* and *invisibility*. The third chest is locked, and Mentonia has the key. It is also trapped such that anyone opening the chest without first disarming the trap suffers an attack from a spring-loaded blade smeared with a nasty poison. The blade has THAC0 15 and strikes for 1d4 points of damage (save vs. poison at –3 or suffer an additional 1d6 points of damage each turn for 2–5 turns). Inside the chest is a set of six finely wrought pewter goblets with gold inlay worth 120 gp for the set, a broadsword in a jeweled scabbard (75 gp), and an enchanted mug that fills with any desired nonmagical, nonpoisonous beverage once/day when the command

word on the bottom of the mug ("Mirakos") is spoken. If the hags have time, they grab some of these treasures before fleeing.

33. Storage Cave. There is no light in this cave except what the PCs provide.

> This cave is dark. A shadowy pile of sticks or tree branches sits along the south wall, and several pieces of badly made furniture have been heaped near the east wall.

If the grell in area **34** has been freed, it is lurking near the ceiling, ready to descend on the first person who enters the cave. The sticks are torches made by the goblins.

34. Grell Cave. A grell inhabits this cave, trapped within a *forcecage*. The grell is a goblin *polymorphed* by the hags to use on the village, if necessary. They feed it well and free it to beleaguer intruders at the first opportunity. Any hit against a tentacle (AC 4) renders it unusable but subtracts no hit points from the grell's total. The grell regenerates lost or damaged tentacles in one day.

Grell: AC 5; MV fly 12 (D); HD 5; hp 28; THAC0 15; #AT 11; Dmg 1–4 (×10)/1–6; SA paralysis (save at +4; effect lasts 5d4 rounds); SD immune to electrical attacks; SZ M; ML 13; INT average (8); AL NE; XP 2,000; *MM*/173.

35. Water Cave.

> A pool of water dominates this room. Heaps of wet swamp plants are strewn around the pool's circumference. Against the north wall is a pile of freshly caught eels, some still squirming. Several sturdy cudgels lie on the floor by the pool. A single torch by the entrance lights the cave.

If not otherwise occupied, there is a 50% chance of encountering 1–4 merrow or scrags here. They emerge from the water in 1–4 rounds. (See "The Covey and Company" sidebar for statistics.)

The pool of water is drinkable and connects with area **36** by a 10'-wide underground stream. PCs without a light source or infravision and the ability to breathe water find it nearly impossible to traverse the twisting, water-filled passage. Searching the pool reveals a sunken chest 10 feet down that contains the merrow's wealth: 567 sp, 138 gp, and 16 pieces of ornamental jewelry (1 gp each).

36. Water Cave and Secret Entrance. This cave connects to both area **35** and the swamp via an underground stream. The exit in the swamp is 6 feet below the water level, about 60 feet west of area **23**. The outlet is 5 feet in diameter and covered with waterlilies and floating vegetation. It can be detected only by magic or by investigation while swimming. Note that mud in the water here makes the entrance difficult to spot; PCs have a base 1-in-12 chance of finding the entrance, 1-in-8 if they have seen the hags, the merrow, or the scrags coming and going via this route. The water from the tunnel quickly mixes with the muck of the swamp, so spotting the entrance from the water's surface is impossible.

Anyone traversing the water tunnel has a 25% chance of encountering 1–2 merrow or scrags along the way.

37. Trash Heap. This dark cave holds the refuse pile generated by the inhabitants of the caves. All manner of garbage and debris is tossed in here. The heap of refuse is home to twenty rot grubs that infest any creature or PC investigating the garbage too closely.

Note that an enraged hag hurling a character into the garbage heap is an effective and rather nasty attack.

Rot grubs (20): AC 9; MV 1, burrow 0; HD ⅛; hp 1 each; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA burrow into flesh; SZ T; ML 5; INT non (0); AL N; XP 15; *MM*/364.

38. Goblins' Lair. This area is part of the old dungeons beneath the ruined keep and houses the hags' goblin servants. If the goblins are here, add them to the following description:

> This room is lit by torches. Five cots are arranged haphazardly around the room, and a table with two benches sits squarely in the center. Scattered on the table are several copper coins and five wooden bowls, but little else can be seen in here.

When not serving the hags, five goblins are here playing dice and complaining about their mistresses' mistreatment. They fight only if commanded by the hags, whom they fear. They flee from any surprise assault, yelling for help. For more information on the goblins, see "The Covey and Company" sidebar.

Any noise here alerts Baunger the ogre in area **39**.

39. Baunger's Room. Baunger lives here and spends most of his time guarding Tamarin Needlecrafter, the female gnome seamstress kidnapped by the merrow. He spend most of his time sleeping on a great pile of pine boughs covered with a thick wool blanket. He is a great lover of drink and is concerned since he is down to his last few bottles of wine. He is not particularly loyal to the hags but fears their power, so he does not openly disobey their orders. He can be easily bribed, however, with drink.

The ogre makes periodic checks on Tamarin, providing her with food that the goblins cook and an occasional nip of wine. Tamarin has been very nice to Baunger, hoping he becomes lax in his duties and allows her an opportunity to escape.

Baunger keeps his treasure buried under his bed: a loose pile of 693 cp, 310 sp, 48 gp, and four tapestries (25 gp each). He also wears a special signet ring worth 150 gp on a thong around his neck. See "The Covey and Company" sidebar for details on Baunger.

40. Cells. Four large cells with rusty metal doors line the west wall of the corridor. The northernmost cell has the only door that is not completely rusted through. The door is barred from the outside. This cell houses the gnomish seamstress, Tamarin Needlecrafter.

The gnome has a dark complexion with white hair worn in pigtails. She was traveling south with her cart and made the mistake of stopping for the night on the outskirts of the swamp. The scrags found and kidnapped her, hoping to curry favor with Mentonia. For the past two weeks, Tamarin has been forced to make and alter clothing to fit the hag. Tamarin has been treated well so far, but only because her work has been good.

She knows that the hags are planning to somehow destroy the town. She also knows about the *hag eye amulet* worn by Evan. (Mentonia mentioned it.) If the PCs free her, she makes each of them 2–5 complete outfits of the highest quality as a reward.

Tamarin Needlecrafter, 0-level female gnome: AC 10; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 10; AL LG; unarmed.

41. Crypts. The crypts are where the hags find and *animate* many of the skeletons. Narrow alcoves held many of the keep's former occupants, but most of these former denizens have been used by the hags for their foul schemes.

Entering the crypts provokes the eight skeletons guarding the area. They rise up from alcoves and advance but do not leave the crypt hallways should PCs retreat. There is no treasure here.

Skeletons (8): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 8, 6, 5 (×4), 3, 2; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; immune to cold, paralysis, poison, and death magic; suffers half damage from edged weapons; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/315.

42. Secret Passage. This corridor leads south for several hundred feet, then bends southeast for a quarter mile, ending at a secret door that opens in the side of a rocky outcropping on the surface (see area **22**). The hags use this passage as an escape route, if necessary.

A set of caved-in stairs once led up to the ruined keep. The area beyond the stairs could be detailed for further adventures.

Covey Options

The following four scenarios represent several possible conclusions to the adventure. The DM should alter them to suit events as they unfold.

☛ **The hags' plan works.** If PCs are completely in the dark about the hags' plan, Evan might easily lure the villagers to the hags' cave. Once the villagers are inside areas **24** and **25**, Evan announces that everyone is safe. To his and everyone's surprise, Lythia emerges from area **26** in the guise of his young love, courtesy of a *change self* spell. She congratulates Evan, then reveals her true form. Gordelly leaves the lair via the underwater passage (area **36**) and enters the caves via area **23**, using the *wand of frost* to create a *wall of ice*, sealing the cave mouth behind her. Mentonia and the remaining merrow then emerge from area **26** and proceed to separate the townsfolk from their wealth and weapons. The hags gloat and cackle as they terrify the duped villagers. The townsfolk are stricken and paralyzed with fear. If violence erupts, many townsfolk run. Some flee into area **26**, and some might even find their way into the hags' tunnels (areas **27–42**). The confusion only delays the inevitable. Note that persuasive and trusted PCs could keep the townsfolk under control and even organize resistance. Regardless of the outcome, Evan sees this as his fault and needs a great deal of consoling. If he is given a task of responsibility by the PCs (for instance, leading the townsfolk away from the battle site), it would go a long way toward restoring his self-confidence. Conversely, one of the hags could use her *change self* ability to appear as a kindly human and lure townsfolk or PCs into an ambush.

Any resistance by the PCs is met with a combined melee attack by the merrow and the hags. Lythia and Gordelly use their *weakness* spells on the strongest looking characters. Gordelly, who currently has the *wand*, hesitates to use it in an enclosed area for fear of striking one of her allies. She uses the *wall of ice* to cut off retreat, though. If Mentonia gets the *wand* back, she has no qualms about using it against a powerful party, even if she hits

The Covey and Company

Mentonia Swampbottom (annis): AC 0; MV 15; HD 7+7; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 9–16/9–16/3–9; SA spells; SD spells; MR 20%; SZ L; ML 15; INT very (12); AL CE; XP 4,000; *MM*/181. Mentonia has the following spell powers performed at the 8th level of ability: *fog cloud* (3/day), *change self*. In addition, Mentonia possesses a *wand of frost* with 29 charges, which she has lent to one of the other hags on several occasions. She also carries potions of *fire resistance* and *flying* in a pouch on her belt, which she uses in combat or to flee. She also carries the key to the third chest in area **32**.

Mentonia wears dresses and shawls of the most expensive and exotic materials she can find (often just wool or linen, although she does possess several silk wraps and a fine kerchief). She crams her clawed feet into well-made leather sandals or shoes, of which she owns several pairs.

Mentonia is the leader of the covey, and the ruse to take the entire town is her idea. She does not put up with contempt for her authority, and the other two hags (not to mention the rest of the company) have some nasty bruises and bite-marks to attest to this fact. Mentonia is vain, and PCs can use this to their advantage. Anyone complimenting her on her appearance causes her to delay any attack by 1–3 rounds as she soaks up the flattery. She even goes so far as to ruin a possible ambush by calling out to her sister hags, "Do we have to kill them?" "They're so perceptive for humans!" "Tell me more!" or some such phrase. This could trigger a full-blown hag argument, further delaying attacks by an additional 1–3 rounds. All delays end if and when adventurers begin attacking, but the delay could be used to cover a retreat or buy some time for other reasons. Conversely, insulting Mentonia's appearance drives her into a shrieking rage and gives her an additional +2 on attack and damage rolls.

Lythia Marrowbone and **Gordelly Toothenail** (greenhags): AC –2; MV 12, swim 12; HD 9; hp 42, 39; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 7–8/7–8; SA spells; SD spells; MR 35%; SZ M; ML 17; INT very (12); AL NE; XP 4,000; *MM*/181. Lythia and Gordelly have the following spell powers, usable once per round at the 9th level of ability: *audible glamer, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, change self, speak with monsters, water breathing,* and *weakness* (reverse of *strength*).

Lythia and Gordelly dress in robes of coarse cloth and are often barefoot. Their tastes are decidedly more conservative than Mentonia's.

As a covey, the three hags possess the following additional spells usable once per day as a 9th-level caster: *curse, polymorph other, animate dead, dream, control weather, veil, forcecage, vision,* and *mind blank.*

Merrow (4): AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 4+4, hp 30, 27, 23, 18; THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1–6/1–6/2–8 or weapon +6; SA charge attack at +1 to hit; SD camouflage; SZ L; ML 12; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 975; *MM*/272 (ogre, aquatic). The merrow do most of the dirty work for the hags. They are loyal and look down on Baunger and the goblins. They see the scrags as near-equals. They typically carry spears, using them to charge underwater opponents for 2–12 points of damage (+1 to hit).

Scrags (3): AC 3; MV 3, swim 12; HD 5+5, hp 33, 27, 21; THAC0 12; #AT 3; Dmg 2–5/2–5/3–12; SD regenerate 3 hp/round; SZ L; ML 14; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 650; *MM*/349 (troll, freshwater aquatic). The scrags are also toadies for the hags, performing any task the covey sees fit. They continually try to gain Mentonia's favor by bringing her gifts. (The gnomish seamstress, Tamarin, was their most recent gift.)

Baunger (ogre): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 or by weapon +6; SZ L; ML 7; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/272. Baunger stands 8 feet tall and has dusty brown skin and hair. He acts as a guard for the covey, watching over Tamarin. He is extremely bored with his duties and dislikes the merrow's constant taunts. He is afraid of the covey and does not disobey a direct order in their presence, but he can be bribed to "look the other way" for a skin of wine.

Baunger knows that the hags are planning somehow to lure the townsfolk to the caves. He also knows that Lythia has been "exploring" the town with the aid of her magic. If given the chance, he flees the lair. He wears a ruby ring worth 150 gp on a leather thong around his neck and would be willing to trade it for wine or ale. The ring is a unique signet ring belonging to a local ruler. It is used to imprint the official wax seal on important documents. Baunger gave a group of half-orc bandits a bag of gold and silver for it several weeks ago. The signet ring could be a springboard for another adventure.

Goblins (5): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ S; ML 7; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/163. The goblins are servants and menial slaves, performing mundane cleaning and food preparation. They wash Mentonia's clothing and replace torches in the lair. Each carries 3–30 sp and 1–10 gp each. They typically wear poorly made leather armor and carry spears or shortswords.

If confronted without hags present, they surrender or flee. They know about the plot to take the town, as well as the *hag eye.*

her allies. If three or more merrow or one hag is slain, the remaining covey members fall back to areas **32** and **33**. They release the trapped grell from the *forcecage* in area **34**. Mentonia covers any retreat with a *fog cloud*. The hags then summon the ogre and goblin guards from areas **38–39**, who arrive in 1d4+1 rounds.

☛ **The PCs are ambushed.** Should the PCs manage to delay or stop the villagers' flight to the cave, or if they plan to investigate the area and the hags catch wind of the plan (via the *hag eye*), the hags can prepare an ambush for the PCs.

To lure the PCs into the cave, the hags remove the *veil* on the entrance and instruct a merrow or scrag to leave a clear trail leading to the entrance. On the trail to the cave (when the PCs are about 50 feet or so from area **23**), an invisible Gordelly hits the PCs with an *ice storm* from the *wand of frost*, forcing PCs to make a Dexterity check or slide down 10 feet into the swamp water. Gordelly withdraws into the cave or dives into the water. Two or three scrags wait in the water to strike PCs who fall in, automatically gaining initiative that round. PCs fighting in the water move at only half their normal rate, and all attacks by the characters suffer a –2 penalty.

The scrags fight for only 1–3 rounds before swimming into the swamp and entering the lair via the underwater tunnel that leads to area **36**. The noise of the skirmish outside marks the beginning of part two of the hag's plan. From area **25**, shouts for help arise. Lythia and Mentonia are responsible for these false shouts; PCs responding to the yells by entering area **25** see the following:

> Upon entering the cave, you see three large, wretched old women with green skin gloating over four humans (three women and one man) trapped in the western alcove. A large iron pot hangs over coals by the north wall. Two goblins hold another human male, trying to thrust him into it. He is yelling as he fights them. The room itself is littered with bones and trash.

The scene is a complex *veil*, concealing some but not all of the hags and their allies. The hags hope to make the PCs focus their energies on the apparent threats, while the *veiled* covey members attack from behind.

Mentonia the annis uses her wand of frost.

Mentonia and Lythia, along with two merrow, are the "humans" trapped in the alcove. The three "hags" are actually three goblins doing their best to look menacing. The two "goblins" holding the "human" are actually two merrow, and the held "human" is another goblin (who runs at the first sign of trouble into the hag tunnels). All of the items in the room (the pot, coals, bones) are part of the *veil* spell. In total, their are ten antagonists in the cave: two hags, four merrow, and four goblins.

To delay adventurers, Lythia and Mentonia plead for help, then make a break for area **24**, running past the PCs. The false hags and goblins advance on the PCs with a tentative frontal assault. After one round, the four "humans" (Lythia, Mentonia, and two merrow) attack from behind, attempting to disable PCs closest to the rear with melee attacks from Mentonia and the merrow, and a *weakness* spell from Lythia aimed at a fighter. Gordelly joins the fight in 2–5 rounds when she emerges from the swamp and enters through area **23**. She uses the *wand* to cut off retreat or if none of her allies stands in the way. The surviving scrags are waiting in area **24** to attack PCs who retreat. They flee and do not return if they witness a hag slain.

Should PCs kill a hag or slay three or more merrow or scrags, the remaining covey members retreat to areas **32** and **33**, under cover of Mentonia's *fog cloud* (assuming she is alive). They summon the ogre and remaining goblins from areas **38** and **39** and release the grell from area **34**. If they suffer more losses, the survivors flee via area **42**. To give the hags more flexibility in moving about their lair, the DM can have them clear or almost clear the rock-filled passages.

continued on page 43

Fridkin the forest gnome confronts some wayward adventurers.

THE AMULET AND THE UNDERDARK

BY WILLIAM KENOWER

The price of peace

Artwork by Bradley McDevitt
Cartography by Delfino

Bill writes: "When I'm not being a parent to two small boys, a husband to one beautiful wife, and a novelist to one ugly novel, I find a few hours every six months to be a DM."

"The Amulet and the Underdark" is an AD&D® adventure set in the fiefdoms of Griswald and Rikard or any generic, feudal fantasy setting. It is designed for 3–6 PCs of levels 5–7 (about 30 total levels).

Adventure Background

Griswald and Rikard are neighboring fiefdoms separated by a dense forest, a mountain range, and a swamp. For years, the two fiefdoms were bitter enemies. Finally, when the present heirs took power, a delicate truce was reached; however, tension between the old rivals remained, as both sides waited to see who would be first to break the pact.

A week before the adventure begins, a detachment of Lord Griswald's men pursued a notorious outlaw through the woods between the two fiefdoms. They tracked him all the way to a village on the outskirts of Lord Rikard's land. Once there, the detachment, led by an overzealous captain, proceeded to tear apart the village in search of the outlaw, tormenting the villagers, destroying homes, and trampling gardens. The soldiers did not find the outlaw.

When word of this event reached Lord Rikard, he was outraged. He sent a message to Griswald demanding immediate recompense to avert all-out war. Griswald was furious at the detachment and desperate to avoid a war with Rikard, as his fiefdom had begun to flourish, and a war would only hinder this progress. He imprisoned the captain but knew that appeasing Rikard would require something more tangible.

Lord Griswald possessed an amulet that, when worn, granted its wearer a +1 bonus to his Intelligence and Charisma. Griswald knew that Rikard coveted the amulet. Therefore, although Griswald had benefitted from the amulet for many years, he decided to send a delegation of men with the amulet to Lord Rikard as compensation for the captain's offense.

Unfortunately, the outlaw whose unknown whereabouts had precipitated the initial trouble still resided with his

cohorts, the Greenwood Bandits, in the woods through which Griswald's peacemakers traveled. The journey through the woods requires two days, and the bandits ambushed the envoys while they was setting up camp at the end of the first day. The bandits were well armed, and their leader, Mordecai VanOstra (a 7th-level bard) employed magic to great advantage. The bandits slew the entire delegation, suffering only one casualty themselves, and took the amulet.

Needing to placate his men who were more interested in gold than magic, Mordecai sold the amulet to a merchant spriggan named Ritzel. He knew Ritzel did business with various factions of the Underdark and could therefore resell the amulet without raising too many eyebrows. Ritzel, feeling no need to increase his Intelligence let alone his Charisma, took the amulet to Dunmudden, the head of a duergar clan in the Underdark, and sold it for a hefty price.

For the Players

When Griswald learned that the amulet did not make it to its destination, he immediately sent his finest diplomat to calm Rikard. He then sought out the PCs, who, for whatever reason, are between adventures in his fiefdom. Griswald summons the PCs to his court, at which point the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> You are brought before Lord Griswald, a powerful looking man of fifty or so. He is grim and obviously troubled.
>
> "Friends," he begins, "thank you for responding to my summons with such haste. My fiefdom stands on the brink of war with my neighbor, Lord Rikard. I have no grievance with Rikard, but recently a rogue captain in my army became over-zealous in his hunt for a renowned bandit. His search took him to a village in Rikard's fiefdom, which he then ransacked. He did not find the outlaw, but his actions outraged Rikard.
>
> The captain is imprisoned, but Rikard cannot be placated with my merely punishing the transgressor. I decided to send Rikard my magical amulet as recompense. When he learned what I was sending it, he was very pleased. Now, however, the amulet has been lost. My envoy never made it to Lord Rikard. I do not know where along their journey they vanished. Rikard now doubts whether I sent the amulet at all, and he is not interested in some other form of compensation. He suspects the disappearance is a lie, and now he has sent an ultimatum: the amulet, or war.
>
> I shall stall him as long as possible. If you can find this amulet for me and bring it to Rikard, I shall reward you with 1,000 gold pieces; what's more, I shall grant you a special position in my guard, whereby you may be called to perform special tasks, and of course, be compensated with a yearly stipend. In such instance, you may always consider my castle a safe haven in times of need, whether it be for healing, rest, or information. Do you accept?"

If the PCs accept, Griswald says that he would like to be kept abreast of the PCs' search; thus, if it appears the amulet is someplace other than the Greenwood Forest, for instance, he would appreciate their stopping by the castle, assuming the castle is not too far out of their way. The PCs are sent immediately with a guide to Thengold Keep near the perimeter of the forest. Griswald supplies the PCs with horses if necessary, plus any other basic supplies they might require. Once at Thengold Keep, the PCs are expected to set out at first light; any delay is met with a threat to withdraw the Lord's offer.

In Search of the Amulet

The PCs are informed that the envoy headed for Rikard's fiefdom by way of a trading path that cuts through the forest. The trail is the quickest route between the fiefdoms, but the woods are considered neutral territory, and thus no patrols from either fiefdom keep creatures away. A random encounter check should be made once every hour or so, with a 1 on 1d6 indicating an encounter. Refer to the "Random Forest Encounters" table for a list of possible encounters.

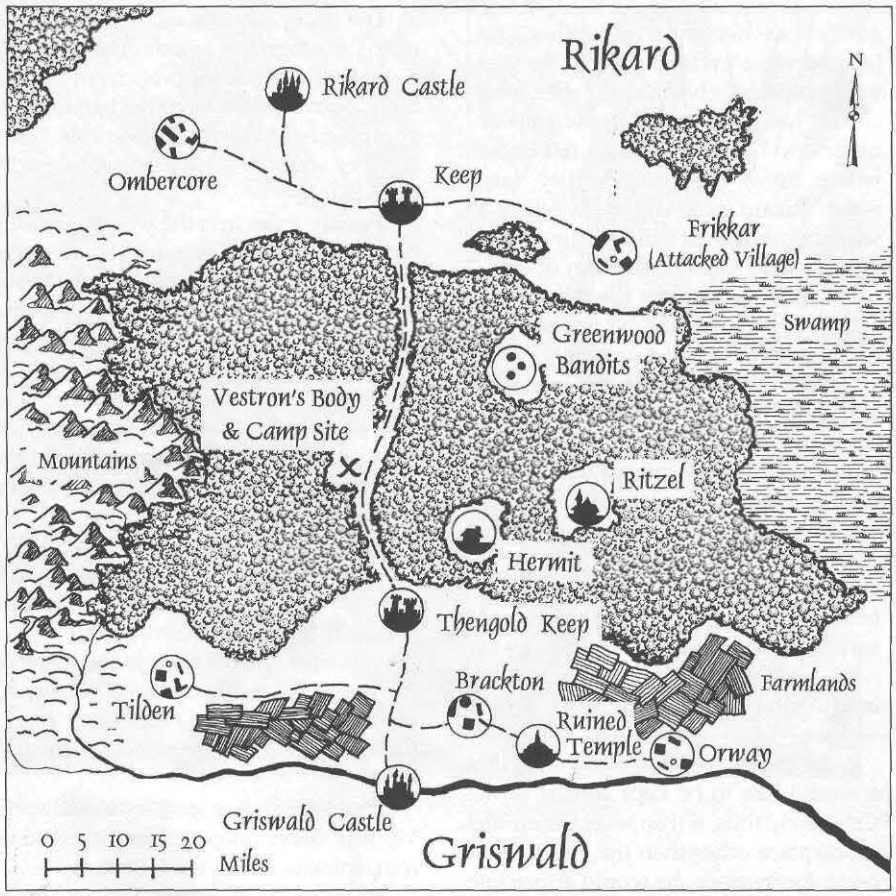
The PCs may attempt to track the envoy through the woods. This requires a successful Tracking proficiency check. It has been six days since the bandits left, applying a –7 penalty to the roll. Non-rangers suffer a –13 penalty (see *PH*, page 86).

Twenty miles into the woods, the PCs come upon the remains of Vestron Tinkage, a guard in the delegation sent to Rikard. He is immediately recognizable as a member of Griswald's army by his uniform. He is laying face down in the brush and appears to have incurred several lacerations, including a nasty one across his stomach. He has been dead for six days and has begun to attract various forest vermin.

The PCs have several options. From the position of Vestron's body, it is apparent that he was headed south when he perished. A ranger may attempt to follow Vestron's tracks back to the scene of the battle. If so, impose a –6 penalty to the ranger's Tracking proficiency check. (If night has fallen, the penalty increases to –11.)

If a cleric casts a *speak with dead* spell, Vestron, depending on what is asked of him, communicates the following:

- My name is Vestron Tinkage. I was a member of Lord Griswald's delegation sent to deliver a gift to Lord Rikard for crimes against his peasants.
- I have been dead for six days.
- The delegation was ambushed by a group of bandits while we were setting up camp the first night.
- The bandits were well organized and well armed and had at least one spellcaster in their numbers. There were between six and ten of them.
- I managed to defeat my attacker, but by that time the battle was lost. I got away and was not pursued. However, the wounds I suffered during the combat were too severe.
- It's possible that the bandits knew we were coming.
- I don't know whether the bandits were in the services of Rikard. They might have been.
- I don't know whether they took the amulet. I assume they did.



Another option would be to *speak with animals*. A bird has a 20% chance of having seen some portion of the battle, a 75% chance of knowing the location of the Greenwood Bandits (by their tents and fire pit), and a 75% chance of knowing the location of the envoy's camp. Other animals' chances are reduced by 10–20% depending on how much the animal travels (i.e., a squirrel might be –20%, while a deer would be –10%).

Approximately one mile north of Vestron's body is the site of the battle. It lies 20 yards east of the path in a clearing. If the PCs have been tracking the envoy, they locate the camp immediately. Otherwise, it is up to the PCs to figure out how far the delegation could have traveled in a day and therefore know to search the area for signs of a camp.

Once the camp is found, finding evidence of the battle is easy. Blood is everywhere, and the envoy's belongings have been ransacked. The actual bodies of the delegation are piled in a heap in some brush off to the side of the encampment.

As before, *speak with dead* spells may be used to uncover information about the bandits. These men know no more than Vestron, except that they are certain the bandits took the amulet.

Tracking the bandits is possible here, with a penalty of –3 (–12 for time passed, +6 for eleven bandits, +3 for thick brush). There are not many clues in the camp as to what actually happened, though it is clear missile weapons were employed in the attack: several arrows are stuck in trees as well as the backs of two members of the delegation.

The Hermit of Greenwood

While they are surveying the carnage or during their search for the bandits' hideout, the PCs receive unexpected aid from the Hermit of Greenwood, who is watching them from behind a tree.

The hermit is Fridkin, a very old (492 years) forest gnome who has lived in the woods for over two hundred years. He is happy that the war between Griswald and Rikard has ended, thereby bringing peace to his beloved forest. He dislikes troops marching through the woods, trampling vegetation and generally making too much noise.

Fridkin has keen instincts and usually knows when someone is traveling on the merchants' path; he often investigates such disturbances. He witnessed the massacre of Griswald's envoy a week earlier and has been waiting for someone to come and retrieve the bodies.

Characters must make a successful Intelligence check at –8 to spot Fridkin hiding nearby. PCs with the Alertness proficiency suffer a –4 penalty instead. Once the PCs spot him, he hides. He is tiny and extremely difficult to locate once hidden. Another Intelligence check at a –8 penalty is required (–4 penalty for rangers). Threats do not bring him out. Asking for help or calling to him in a gentle voice, however, brings him forth.

If the PCs lure Fridkin out of hiding, they quickly learn the biggest obstacle to getting information out of him. Fridkin has been solitary for so long, speaking almost exclusively with woodland creatures, that his vernacular has changed. He is willing to answer questions but is unable to break out of his odd speech patterns. Here are examples of Fridkin's answers to typical questions:

- **What is you name?** "Name I, oh, hoo-hoo! Yes, Fridkin that was which I were, yes."
- **Where do you live?** "Long time there, not far tree-stump from, hoo-hoo! Tree then green beneath dark brown leaves a-tangle. Yes, yes."
- **Did you see who killed these men?** "Yes, hmm, oh, yes, yes." (The PCs might extrapolate from this response that "yes" and "no" questions are best.)
- **Who killed these men?** (His voice grave, his little brows furrowed) "Rotten those that cowards far. Tent-thieves twelve, now less, that which for a loss no less. Behind holes hide they not far."

If the PCs press him to be clearer, Fridkin only repeats what he has said louder and slower. Yes and no questions are best. He willingly guides the PCs to the camp of the Greenwood Bandits, but he does not help with the assault. He also knows the whereabouts of Ritzel and takes the PCs there if they ask him.

Fridkin (forest gnome): AC 10; MV 9; HD 2; hp 4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA set traps; SD –4 AC bonus vs. medium or large opponents; SZ (3' tall); ML 10; INT average (10); AL NG; dagger, sling with 12 stones.

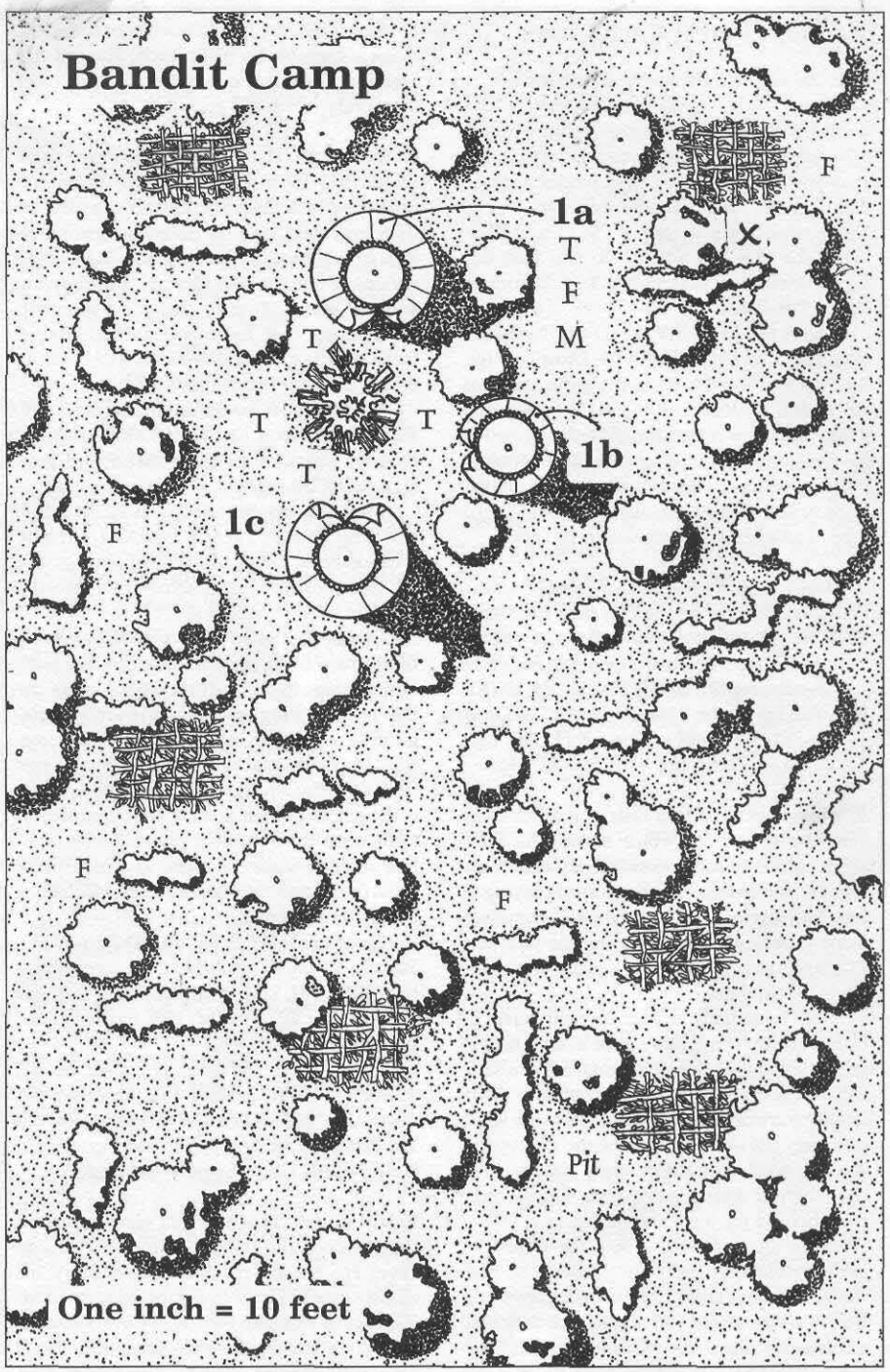
The Greenwood Bandits

The bandits' camp is well hidden and guarded. There are eleven members in total (twelve before the ambush): five 2nd-level fighters, five 4th-level thieves, and Mordecai VanOstra. Each **F** on the map represents a fighter armed with a shortbow and battleax. Each **T** represents a thief armed with a shortsword and six throwing daggers. The **M** represents Mordecai.

If intruders are spotted, the fighters creep back to camp and give a bird call, signalling the other members of the band. An ambush is then quickly set. Mordecai gathers three fighters around him by tent **1a** and casts his *invisibility 10' radius* spell. The thieves hide in shadows at the periphery of the campsite. The two remaining fighters wait by the tent flaps of tents **1b** and **1c** with shortbows. When the PCs reach a vulnerable spot, Mordecai gives another bird call. This signals the fighters in the tents to start shooting. He and the other fighters then move as carefully as they can to the nearest PC or PCs and, on the following round, attack. When the thieves see Mordecai drop the *invisibility*, they ambush any nearby PCs, backstabbing them where possible.

If the PCs approach quietly enough, they could dispatch one or two guards and approach the camp unseen. Noise from combat has a 50% chance plus a cumulative 15% chance per round of drawing the attention of the other bandits. Should this occur, VanOstra and his men retreat to the end of camp farthest from where the noise originated, fan out, and wait to use missile weapons or magic at the first sight of intruders.

There are several pit traps in the camp. They are covered with tarps and brush and are virtually undetectable without magic (*detect snares & pits*, for example) or a thief carefully searching for traps. Each pit is 8 feet deep and lined with sharpened stakes. Anyone falling in a pit suffers 3–12 points of damage. A Dexterity check made at a –8 penalty or a successful Tumbling proficiency check with a –4 penalty leaves the PC dangling by her fingertips from the lip of the pit. A successful Strength check allows the PC to pull herself out the following round.



The sound of a trap being sprung, regardless of whether a PC actually falls into the pit, results in two fighters and one thief arriving in 2 rounds to investigate. The bandits approach cautiously, as they are aware it might be more than small game that has tumbled into their trap. Therefore, the thief leads the way, moving silently until he is close enough

Random Forest Encounters

Roll 1d6 or choose from the following.

1. Ogres. Six ogres in a small clearing about 10 yards from the path are arguing loudly over who gets to eat the most tender parts of a dead boar. The PCs hear the ogres before the ogres become aware of the PCs. If they wish, the PCs can attempt to slip past the ogres unnoticed, although this is not possible on horseback.

Ogres (6): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 18, 17 (×3), 16, 13; THAC0 17; # AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (or by weapon +6); SA +2 to hit with weapon; SZ L; ML 11; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/272; great club (Dmg 2d4+2).

One ogre is carrying a sack containing various heads of animals, rotten fruit, an old boot, and the band's treasure: 548 sp, 22 gp, 8 pp, and a silver chalice worth 100 gp.

2. Manticores. A male and a female manticore swoop down on the PCs from the skies. Each manticore fires two volleys of spikes first, then drops down to engage in melee.

Manticores (2): AC 4; MV 12, fly 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 30, 25; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–8; SA tail spikes; SZ H (15'); ML 14; INT low (7); AL LE; XP 975; *MM*/246.

3. Wolfweres. The PCs hear a strange song sung by a baritone voice ahead. As they approach, they see two minstrels sitting on logs by the side of the road, one playing a lute and singing a sad, tragic song, the other leaning back against a tree, listening. If the PCs approach, they are asked by the minstrels to join them.

This is actually a pair of wolfweres in human form. If the PCs sit for even a round and listen to the song, they must make a saving throw vs. spell or be overcome with lethargy, which affects the PCs as a *slow* spell and lasts 1d4+4 rounds. Once the wolfweres see the spell take effect, they change into their hybrid forms, seize their longswords from behind the logs, and attack.

If the PCs are suspicious, the minstrels explain that they are only pausing, or that the woods aren't really all that dangerous, or that they are lost, or whatever else they can think of to allay the PCs' suspicions. The song cannot have its effect unless the PCs are all silent for one round. If attacked while in human form, the wolfweres grab their swords and defend themselves.

Wolfweres (2): AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 22, 20; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2–12 and by weapon type; SA singing; SD iron or +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 14; INT high (13); AL CE; XP 1,400; *MM*/363.

One wolfwere has a pouch containing six black jaspers worth 50 gp each. The other is wearing a gold ring with two small, inset diamonds worth 350 gp.

4. Merchants. The PCs encounter two spice merchants from Rikard riding a wagon pulled by two draft horses and guarded by three men-at-arms. The merchants are anxious to get through the woods to their destinations (Brackton and Orway), but they are friendly and willing to chat for a moment. They report that the mood around Rikard these days is grim and anxious. Most people are certain that war is inevitable.

Merchants, 0-level human males (2): AC 10; MV 12; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 9; INT very (11); AL CG; dagger.

Men-at-arms, human males F2 (3): AC 7; MV 9; hp 12 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL CG; studded leather armor, longsword.

5. Gnolls. A pack of twelve gnolls and one flind are waiting on either side of the path and attempt to ambush the PCs. Unless the PCs are watching for them, it is unlikely the gnolls are spotted. At the appropriate time, they leap out, attacking wizards and priests first, then the strongest looking fighter. That is the extent of their tactics. They continue to fight until their numbers have been cut in half or their leader is slain, at which point they must make a successful morale check every round or flee.

Gnolls (12): AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 15, 13, 10 (×5), 9 (×3), 8, 7; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 12 (11 without flind); INT low (7); AL CE; XP 35; *MM*/158; morning star, pouch holding 2–8 gp.

Flind: AC 5; MV 12; HD 2+3; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1–4 (flindbar); SA disarm; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 120; *MM*/158; flindbar, gold arm band (worth 125 gp), pouch holding 35 gp.

6. Hill Giant. A solitary hill giant has wandered down into the forest from his hillside cave. He has no rocks but does carry his massive club. He is tromping loudly, heading east to west, and the PCs have 3 rounds (four if a thief makes a successful Detect Noise roll) from the time they hear him coming to when he crosses their path. He is not looking for prey, so a reasonable attempt to hide should be successful. If the PCs do not hide, the giant sees them and attacks.

Hill Giant: AC 3; MV 12; HD 12+1; hp 50; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+7 (great club); SZ H; ML 13; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 3,000; *MM*/141. The hill giant's navel is pierced with a diamond stud worth 350 gp.

to determine what or who has stumbled into the trap. If the thief approaches undetected and spots the PCs, the three bandits return to camp and an ambush, as described above, is set. If the thief and fighters, for some reason, do not spot the PCs before approaching the pit, and the PCs kill the scouts, the remaining bandits react as if they heard one of their guards being ambushed.

The campsite itself consists of a fire pit surrounded by four logs where the bandits eat. Surrounding the fire pit are three large tents where the bandits sleep. If the PCs successfully sneak up on the bandits, four thieves are sitting around the fire, while Mordecai and the remaining two bandits (one fighter and one thief) are conversing in tent **1b**. The tents themselves contain lanterns bedrolls, worthless belongings, and a few spare weapons.

The bandits' treasure is contained in a double-locked strongbox that Mordecai keeps buried at the **X** in the northeast corner of the camp. Only Mordecai knows the location of the strongbox. (He becomes *invisible* whenever he digs it up.) It is buried about nine inches under the ground and covered in brush. The strongbox also contains his spellbook. He keeps the keys to the strongbox in a false heel in his boot. Inside the box are 89 cp, 456 sp, 765 gp (the payment for the amulet plus what the the bandits already had), two topaz earrings worth 100 gp each, and a potion of *extra-healing*.

Fighters, human males F2 (5): AC 7 (6 with shield); MV 9; hp 12 each; THAC0 19 (18 with scimitar); #AT 3/2 (scimitar) or 2/1 (shortbow); Dmg by weapon type (+2 for specialization); SZ M; ML 11; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 65; studded leather armor, wooden shield, scimitar (specialized), shortbow, 12 sheaf arrows, dagger.

Thieves, human males T4 (5): AC 7; MV 12; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 (shortsword) or 2/1 (throwing daggers); Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 175; leather armor, shortsword, six throwing daggers.

Thief abilities: PP 35%, OL 35%, FRT 35%, MS 50%, HS 50%, DN 10%, CW 80%, RL 0%.

Mordecai VanOstra, human male B7: AC 2; MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 15; ML 12; AL LE; XP 1,400; *bracers of defense AC 4, broadsword +1*, dagger, spellbook (contains all the spells Mordecai has memorized plus the following: *change self, detect magic, identify, read magic, ventriloquism,* and *invisibility*).

Thief Abilities: CW 70%, DN 60%, PP 50%, RL 40%.

Spells (3/2/1): 1st—*affect normal fires, magic missile, sleep;* 2nd—*strength, ray of enfeeblement;* 3rd—*invisibility 10' radius.*

If the PCs defeat the bandits, they may interrogate the survivors to obtain information about Ritzel and the amulet. Fridkin knows where to find Ritzel but does not know that he has the amulet. The best option for the PCs is to force one or two of the bandits to surrender.

If Mordecai is slain or captured, the remaining bandits must make a morale check; those who fail surrender immediately or, if possible, run away. Obtaining information from captured bandits is not difficult; even Mordecai tells what he did with the amulet if he thinks it will save his hide.

If the PCs are good-aligned, they should not be allowed to execute the bandits in cold blood once they acquire the information they need. The bandits must be brought back to Griswald for their punishment. The PCs might also take captured bandits with them as guides to Ritzel. Whether the bandits are taken back to Griswald or brought along as forced guides, an escape attempt is likely and can be handled however the DM wishes. The PCs could also just let the bandits go or leave them tied to a tree until the militia comes to apprehend them.

If the PCs question the bandits, they are told that the amulet was sold to Ritzel, a spriggan merchant who has a hovel twenty or so miles east of their camp. They explain that he comes by from time to time and buys their plundered goods. They don't know exactly what he did with the amulet, though they suspect he sold it to someone in the Underdark.

Ritzel

This spriggan lives in a shabby hovel made of bark, logs, and mud. The hovel is 15' × 15' and filled with odd, valueless trinkets. He does have a locked box in one corner of the shack containing 9 pp and 145 gp—money obtained from the sale of the amulet, minus the amount used to buy his chainmail from the duergar. There are no clues in the hovel as to what he did with the amulet.

When the PCs arrive, Ritzel is outside his home cooking a meal over an open fire. The PCs can avoid a fight with the spriggan. Ritzel is foul, scurrilous, and deceitful, but he is not stupid. He knows that even in giant form he is probably outnumbered and outmatched. Upon sighting the PCs, he attempts to flee, or, if given the opportunity, barter for his life. He speaks a crude, profanity-laced version of Common when explaining what he did with the amulet. If the PCs attack him, he assumes giant size and fights fiercely. Of course, as with the bandits, he is no good to the PCs dead.

Ritzel gives only the information that is asked of him. Therefore, if the PCs ask, "What did you do with the amulet?" he answers, "I sold it." If asked, "To whom?" he replies, "Some duergar," and so on. The PCs must phrase their questions carefully. Eventually, this is what they can learn:

Ritzel sold the amulet to the chieftain of a duergar clan in the Underdark. He used all the money to buy his chainmail (a lie). He enters the Underdark via a tunnel beneath a ruined temple outside of Brackton. Once in the Underdark, the PCs must follow a small river north until it comes to the duergar compound.

The PCs may now go straight to the temple or back to Griswald. If the PCs decide to take Ritzel with them, he does his best to escape. His magic, thieving abilities, and power to assume giant form make him a troublesome prisoner. If the PCs take him back to Griswald, Ritzel is certain the Lord will have him killed and therefore does anything within his power to escape. If they decide to go straight to the temple, he is less inclined to escape but tries at least once before they arrive. Whatever they do, the PCs should find Ritzel a difficult captive, and his escape attempts and whining should slow their travel considerably.

Ritzel (spriggan): AC 1; MV 9 (15); HD 4 (8+4); hp 21 (44); THAC0 17 (11); #AT 2; Dmg 2–8/2–8 (bardiche) +7 (in giant form); SA spells, thief abilities (small form only); SZ S or L; ML 16; INT high (13); AL CE; XP 3,000, *MM*/162; *chainmail +1* (sized for gnome), bardiche.

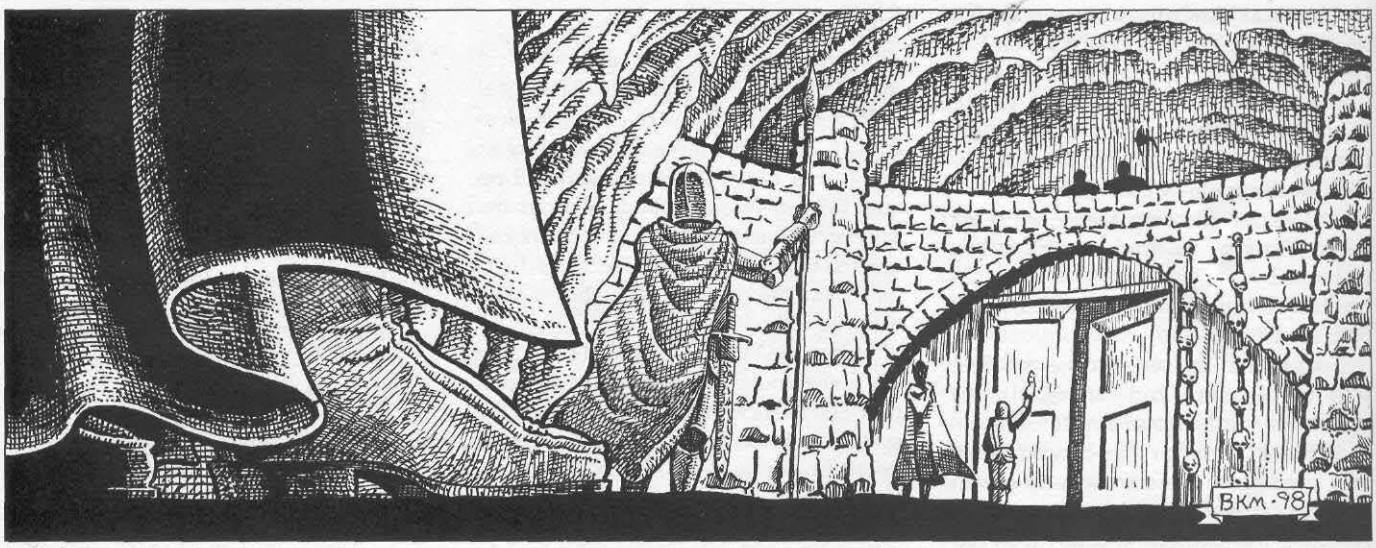
If the PCs catch Ritzel and gain the necessary information, award them full experience as if they had killed him.

Back to Griswald

If the PCs decide to return to the castle first, they find that Griswald, fearing the worst, has begun making preparations for war. With the information they have for him, he can continue to stall Rikard.

If the PCs tell Griswald that the amulet was sold to the duergar, Griswald thinks for a moment and summons his mage, Andwin. Upon Andwin's arrival, Griswald instructs his mage to whip up something to help the PCs contend with the duergar. If the PCs ask, Griswald informs them that Andwin may not the most powerful mage (he's 8th level), but he gives excellent advice and has, of late, displayed a "knack for creating minor magical items." Griswald also asks his priest, Mieron, to heal anyone who requires healing. (Mieron can cast three *cure light wounds* and one *cure serious wounds* spell per day. If the PCs are in bad shape, Mieron casts the same spells again the next day). The PCs are given good meals and warm beds for the night, and Griswald suggests that travel should begin at first light the following day.

The next morning, as the PCs are getting ready to head off for the temple, Griswald comes to them with Andwin. Andwin, looking exhausted, hands each of them a plain gold ring. He tells them that these rings, when worn, make their wearers appear to be duergar (as per the wizard's *change self* spell). What's more, PCs wearing the rings can speak and understand the duergar language (as per *comprehend languages* and *tongues*). They do not, however, have any of the natural or magical abilities of the duergar such as *invisibility* and *enlargement*. Because he had but one night to create the rings, he does not know how long the effects will



Visitors from the surface approach the gates of the duergar compound.

last: it might be six hours, or it might be three days.

As it happens, the rings' abilities last six hours once activated. After that, they lose their magical powers and are mere jewelry. Each gold ring is worth 10 gp.

Into the Underdark

The temple is one mile east of Brackton along the River Wren. It is a 30' × 30' stone structure, though not much remains of the temple itself. Most of the walls and all of the ceiling are gone. The floor and dais however, remain intact. If a small stone at the base of the dais is removed, there is a lever that can be pulled, allowing the dais to slide aside. Fifteen feet below the dais is a small chamber with a large stone door in the west wall. The door is unlocked but requires a singular Strength of 19 or combined Strength of 45 to open. (Ritzel assumes giant size to do so.)

Beyond the portal is a natural stone tunnel heading west. It slopes down noticeably as it bends north and then south and then north again. In all, the tunnel is several miles long, and by the time it empties out into a large cavern, the PCs have descended a half-mile. The cavern is 60 feet wide, 30 feet high, and stretches north into the darkness. Ten feet up on the south wall, a 2'-wide, 4'-deep stream spills out and runs down into the floor of the cavern, bisecting evenly.

The PCs are now in the Underdark. The duergar compound is five miles north. Assuming the PCs know to follow the stream, it is a straight shot to the duergar compound.

The trip through the Underdark can be treacherous. The PCs should have at least one encounter from the "Random Underdark Encounters" sidebar.

The Duergar Compound

As the PCs approach the south gate of compound, read the following:

> The cavern has been gradually widening for the last quarter mile. As you round a bend, both the far and near walls disappear into the gloom. Ahead of you is an impressive sight: a 20'-high, crenelated stone wall stretching across the entire breadth of the cavern. You can just make out the heads of several short figures patrolling the wall. The stream flows beneath a wooden gate that provides the only discernible opening in the wall.

If the PCs do not possess the rings, there are a number of extremely risky ways into the duergar compound.

First, there is a secret entrance on the western edge of the wall. Someone recently removed a section of rock where the wall meets the cavern. The rock was then replaced. If it is detected (a standard find secret doors roll) and then removed, the space is large enough for one man-sized creature to slip between the wall and cavern.

PCs may also enter the compound by climbing over the wall. Assuming the PCs are able to approach the wall undetected, they have 4 rounds to get up, over, and away from the wall before the guards return to that portion of the wall. Invisible PCs, barring any loud noises from a fall, should be able to get up and over undetected.

Using the secret door or scaling the walls is far from safe, as the wall has parapets that are patrolled by two pairs of duergar armed with light crossbows and horns to sound the alarm when hostile intruders are detected. Each pair of guards traverses half of the wall, which takes about 5 rounds. However, the duergar are alert and possess infravision. Unless the PCs are invisible or otherwise conceal their approach, there's an 80% chance that they are spotted by one or more guards.

Another option would be to crawl or swim under the gate. The stream that passes beneath the gate widens to 7 feet and deepens to 3 feet as it flows into the duergar compound. A PC can swim along the bottom of the stream and under the gate with a 20% chance of going undetected, but there is only a 15% chance that he or she could emerge from the water undetected.

If the PCs have the magical rings provided by Lord Griswald, they may enter the compound disguised as duergar without raising the alarm. PCs might have other magical ways of entering the compound (*fly, dimension door*, and so forth). Unless the PCs' plans are clearly flawed, the DM should allow such methods a reasonable chance of success.

Should the patrols spot the PCs, they blow their horns to sound the alarm. They then crouch behind the crenelations and fire their crossbows. They cannot, however, hit PCs who are within 10 feet of the wall. Ten 1st-level duergar fighters and the duergar priest/thief from area **2a** arrive in three rounds to assist. Five of the fighters and the priest/thief climb the wall and defend with missile weapons. The other five turn *invisible* and remain on the ground, ambushing PCs who circumvent or breach the wall. All duergar, unless otherwise stated, *enlarge* themselves when engaging in melee combat.

If combat continues for more than 10 rounds, another 10 2nd-level duergar fighters and a 4th-level duergar fighter from area **18** arrive, either mounting the wall or guarding the gate, whichever seems most necessary.

Wall sentinels, male duergar F2 (4): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 to save vs. poison and magical attacks, spell immunity; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 650; *MM*/96; chainmail, small wooden shield, pick, light crossbow. All duergar have the innate abilities of *enlarge* and *invisibility*.

Random Underdark Encounters

Roll 1d4 or choose from the following.

1. Tunnel Centipede. This giant centipede has a burrow near the stream leading to the duergar compound. It lunges from its hole at the lead PC. If it suffers 15 points of fire damage or is reduced to 30 hp or fewer, the centipede retreats back to its cyst. The PCs must draw it out or follow the centipede into its lair if they want the treasure hidden therein.

The cyst is large, 50' × 60' × 20', and contains numerous skeletons and heaps of offal. Scattered about are 45 gp, 13 sp, and a large red spinal worth 500 gp.

Tunnel centipede: AC 4; MV 6; HD 9+3; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2d8; SA lunge; SZ G (25' long); ML 12; INT non (0); AL N; XP 1,400; *MM*/42.

2. Bugbears. Nine bugbears have set up camp and are eating and arguing. Unless the PCs create a sizable disturbance, they become aware of the bugbears before the bugbears become aware of them. There are two bugbears on watch, however, one ten yards to the north of the camp, and one ten yards to the south; only after quietly dispatching the look-outs can the remaining band be surprised.

Bugbears (8): AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +2; SA surprise; SZ L; ML 12; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 120; *MM*/32; morning star, 3–12 gp each.

Bugbear leader: AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3; SA surprise; SZ L; ML 13; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 175; *MM*/32; broadsword, pouch with two chunks of transparent rock crystal (worth 50 gp each).

3. Huge Bats. Two mobats hunt this cavern from time to time. They swoop down out of the darkness, their great speed imposing a –3 penalty to the PCs' surprise rolls. Each mobat emits a terrible shriek as its closes on its prey; PCs failing a saving throw vs. paralysis cover their ears and suffer –4 penalties to attack rolls and proficiency checks. Furthermore, wizards and priests who fail their saving throws cannot cast spells until the shrieking stops.

Huge bats (2): AC 7 (2 while flying); MV 3, fly 15 (C); HD 6; hp 26, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA screech; SD surprise; SZ H (16' wingspan); ML 12; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 975; *MM*/15.

4. Duergar Trading Caravan. Twenty-five duergar are making their way to the compound to sell a load of fine silver bowls and raw quartz, as well as buy whatever goodies they can. The bowls, twenty-five in total, are worth between 15 gp each; the quartz could fetch 200 gp for the lot.

Because there are so many and because they have short legs, the duergar are probably moving more slowly than the PCs. Therefore, the PCs can simply outdistance this caravan and avoid them. PCs in duergar form can join the group and slip into the duergar compound. These duergar aren't particularly amiable, but PCs making a successful Charisma check can talk the leader into letting them join the caravans' ranks.

Duergar (24): AC 4; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic; SD +4 to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 420; *MM*/96; chainmail, small wooden shield, pick, pouch with 1–6 gp. All duergar have the innate abilities of *enlarge* and *invisibility*.

Caravan leader, male duergar F4: same statistics as above except AC 3; HD 4+8; hp 25; THAC0 17; INT average (10); XP 1,400; chainmail, *shield +1*, pick, pouch with 2–12 pp and 2–24 gp.

In the Compound

The shaded areas are highly visible sections of the compound where the PCs are certain to encounter duergar. The shaded areas represent the main thoroughfares of the duergar community. Unshaded areas are places where PCs can skulk around in their natural forms without arousing too much attention.

In shaded areas, always assume there is at least one duergar in eye shot. What's more, a patrol (see below) is never far away. In addition, the market (area **8**) draws an assortment of demihuman and giant-classed monsters. Thus, the PCs could also encounter orcs, gnolls, ogres, bugbears, or goblins. For more details, see the description of area **8** below.

Duergar are warlike, suspicious, and nasty. Even non-warriors carry weapons, but they are not heavily armored. They do, of course, possess the magical and thieving abilities common to all duergar.

If human PCs are encountered in non-duergar guise, the duergar encountering them do not call for help or attack immediately. These duergar are traders, and humans are known to conduct business here. Therefore, unless the PCs are engaged in some task counter to the duergar's betterment, such as killing an officer or picking a lock, they are not attacked. However, humans are unusual in the compound, so the PCs must prove that they are here on business. The DM should make a reaction check whenever a confrontation occurs between the PCs and one or more duergar; if the result is "hostile," the duergar attack. Otherwise, the PCs are tolerated.

Elves, dwarves, half-elves, gnomes, and halflings are another matter entirely.

These races are not welcome in the duergar compound and are attacked on sight. Only slaves are protected from the duergar's wrath. If PCs pass themselves off as slaves, they are watched closely but not attacked without cause.

A basic duergar patrol consists of six footsoldiers and a patrol leader riding a steeder (giant spider variant). If battle erupts between the PCs and a duergar patrol inside the compound, reinforcements arrive in 1d4+2 rounds in the form of another duergar patrol.

Foot soldiers, male duergar F2 (6): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 650; *MM/96*; chainmail, small wooden shield, pick, light crossbow. All duergar have the innate abilities of *enlarge* and *invisibility*.

Patrol leader, male duergar F4: same statistics as above except AC 2; HD 4+8; hp 25; THAC0 17; INT average (10); XP 975; platemail, small wooden shield, pick, light crossbow.

Steeder: AC 4; MV 12; HD 4+4; hp 23; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA leap, secretion; SZ L (8' diameter); ML 13; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 975; *MM/326*.

All non-warrior duergar have the following statistics unless otherwise noted:

Typical duergar: same statistics as above except AC 8; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 6; XP 420; leather armor, pick, pouch containing 2–8 gp.

PCs With Rings

Even if the PCs have the rings, they are not permitted to simply breeze through the front gates of the compound. The duergar are a suspicious lot, almost as distrustful of other duergar clans as they are of other races. Therefore, if the PCs choose to enter the compound via the front gates, they need to have a sound reason for entering.

There are several things to bear in mind here. First, they are not necessarily dressed or equipped like standard duergar. The PCs' armor may not possess the usual colors and construction of duergar armor. Secondly, the guards are highly suspicious if the PCs try to convince them they are from this clan, as it is unlikely they would recognize even one member of the party. Attempts by the PCs to convince any guard that they are natives draws extreme suspicion (+4 penalty to reaction rolls).

If suspicion is aroused, the PCs are detained and questioned. The PCs' best chance of avoiding further grief is to convince the duergar that they are traders here on business (–2 to reaction rolls). They could also be adventuring duergar, though this is unusual (no modifier to reaction rolls). Whatever the explanation, if the PCs do not handle the initial interrogation well, they are escorted to the Commander of the Guard in area **17a** by two duergar patrols.

Duergar society is rough and unsentimental. This particular clan is unusual in that its non-warriors (1+2 HD duergar) are both merchants and worthy combatants. In return for paying taxes, the non-warriors are given free food, shelter, and protection.

Finding the Amulet

The amulet now hangs around the neck of Dunmudden, the duergar chieftain. He loves the amulet and has no interest in parting with it. Any duergar citizen has a 20% chance of knowing that Dunmudden has recently acquired a flashy new piece of jewelry, and any citizen can point the PCs in the direction of Dunmudden's palace. No citizen except the bursar and a few merchants (DM's choice) have met or heard of Ritzel.

If the PCs claim to have come to trade something for the amulet, they must first visit the bursar, Deggin (see area **5**). The bursar determines whether the item is valuable enough to bother showing to the chieftain. If the item is magical and worth more than 5,000 XP, or if the item is nonmagical but worth at least 2,000 gp, the bursar arranges a meeting with Dunmudden. (See area **5** for details.) However, no matter what the PCs offer him, Dunmudden is not interested in a trade.

Compound Encounter Key

1a. South Gate. This 10'-wide, 15'-high gate is kept barred at all times. There are two towers on either side of the gate with winding staircases that provide access to the wall and parapets. In addition to the guards manning the wall (see "The Duergar Compound" section), there are two 3+6 HD duergar on guard here, one stationed in each tower. Anyone wishing to enter the compound must prove to these guards they are traders or members of the resident clan. If the PCs' lies are not convincing, they are told bluntly to go away. If the PCs do not leave promptly, the guards raise their crossbows and explain that the PCs have ten seconds to turn around and begin walking south before they get a crossbow bolt in their chest.

Any combat here attracts the occupants of area **2a** and the guards on the wall.

Tower guards, male duergar F3 (2): AC 2; MV 6; HD 3+6; hp 19 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 975; *MM/96*; platemail, wooden shield, pick, light crossbow, pouch with 3–12 gp. These duergar have the innate abilities of *enlarge* and *invisibility*.

1b. North Gate. This area is identical to area **1a** except that fighting draws the attention of the occupants of area **2b**.

2a & 2b. Guard Houses. Both of these barracks house ten 1+2 HD duergar and one duergar captain (a multiclassed 5th-level priest/5th-level thief).

The ten fighters are housed in the front portion of the barracks. There is a large table surrounded by chairs in the center of the barracks, while ten cots and ten footlockers line the north and south walls. Each footlocker is locked and contains basic personal possessions: a suit of leather armor, an extra pick, a hammer and nails, and a flask of oil. One footlocker in area **2a** (DM's choice) contains a simple leather vest. Sewn into the vest's lining is a small brass box containing two diamond earrings worth 100 gp each.

Half of the duergar are sitting around the table gambling, the other half lounging in their cots.

The captain is quartered in the rear portion of the barracks. A heavy curtain is strung from the north to south wall to

separate this area. Inside, the captain has a simple bed, a foot locker (locked), a writing desk, and a chair. The writing desk contains guard performance evaluations; these notes are eventually submitted to the Commander of the Guard (area **17**). The captain's footlocker in area **2a** contains the usual personal effects, plus a false bottom containing a scroll with three priest spells (cast at 8th-level): *protection from good, dispel magic,* and *cure serious wounds.*

Captain of the Guard, male duergar P5/T5: AC 4; M 6; HD 5+5; hp 32; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity, innate abilities (*enlarge* and *invisibility*); SZ S; ML 13; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 2,000; MM/96; *leather armor +2, footman's mace +1,* pouch containing 4–24 gp.

Thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 45%, FRT 50%, MS 50%, HS 45%, DN 30%, CW 70%, RL 20%.

Spells (5/4/1): 1st—*bestow curse, cause fear, cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good*; 2nd—*chant, charm person or mammal, know alignment, silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*cause disease.*

3. Garden. Surrounded by a 2'-high iron-wrought fence with one gate in the northwest corner, this "garden" grows all of the peculiar lichen, moss, and fungi the duergar use for spice and sustenance. Posted along the fence are several signs in duergar, all reading, "No Stomping." Anyone climbing the fence and exploring the garden has an 80% chance of incurring the wrath of Disnik, the gardener from area **4**.

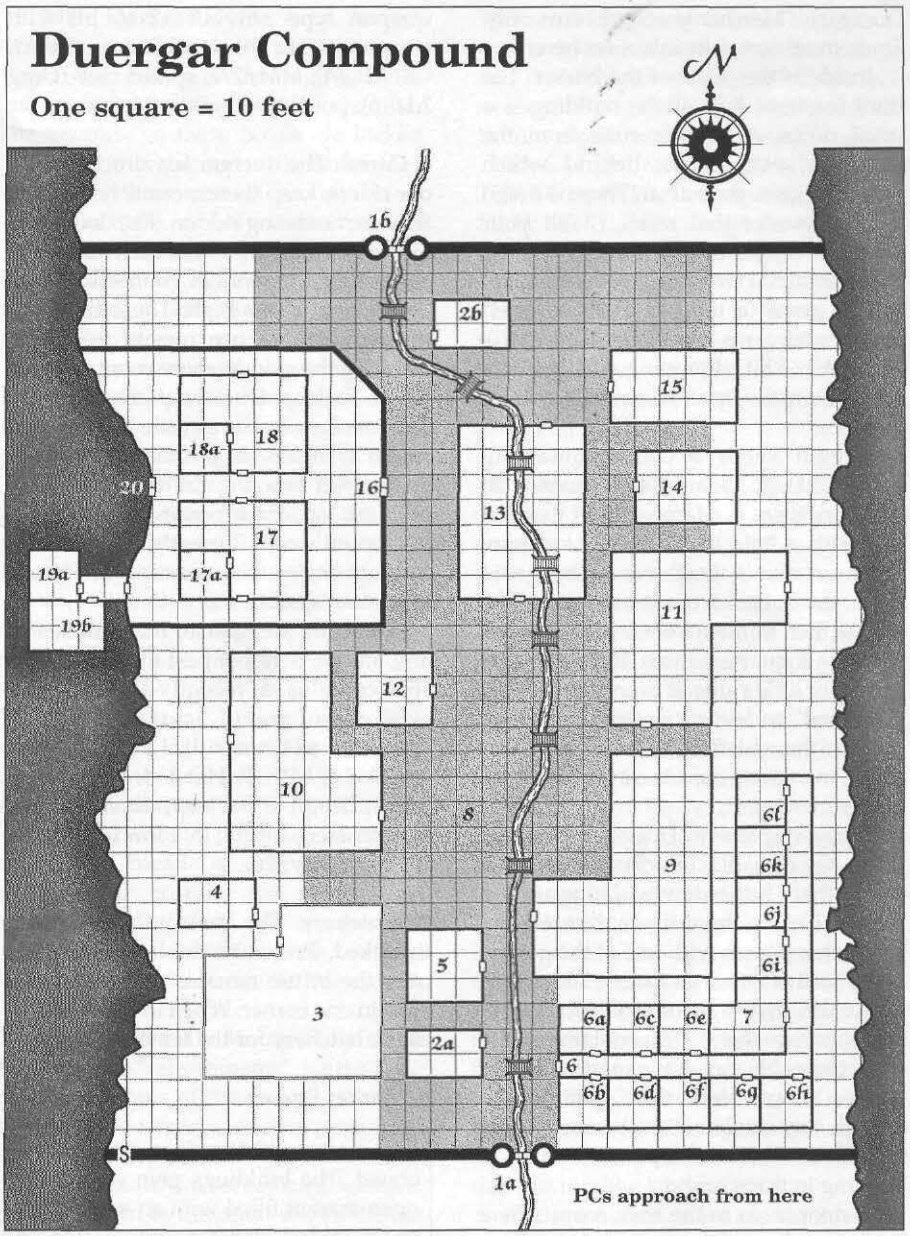
4. Gardener's Quarters. This messy, one-room structure is the home of Disnik the gardener. In addition to mounds of gardening equipment, there are countless odd bits of junk he has collected over the years including a spinning wheel, four brooms, five empty trunks, buckets, a small anchor, and a sewing dummy (duergar-sized).

If threatened, Disnik turns *invisible* and flees. It is 25% likely that he thinks to notify a guard of anything suspicious. His only concern, beyond accumulating junk, is the well-being of the garden. To this end, he scolds and curses any trespassers. If this doesn't drive them from the garden, he pulls a dagger from his belt and waves it menacingly. If he is somehow cornered or caught, he uses his dagger to protect himself.

If the PCs are so inclined, they may search Disnik's abode. This takes at least 10 turns, as there are hundreds of containers that must be searched through. A thorough search uncovers 25 sp, 2 gp, and what appears to be a *broom of flying.* The command word, "away," is inscribed in Common on its handle. However, if the command word is spoken, the holder of the broom learns that it is actually a *broom of animated attack.*

Disnik, male duergar F1: AC 10; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; innate *enlarge* and *invisibility*; SZ S; ML 13 (17 while defending garden); INT average (9); AL LE; XP 175 (basically harmless); *MM/96*; dagger, spade (Dmg 1d6/1d6).

5. Bursar's Office. Beside the door to this building is a brass plaque that reads (in



Duergar), "Merchants accept coins only. Trade in all non-coin valuables here!"

Inside is the office of the bursar. The front (eastern) half of the building is a small office. A counter runs from the north to south walls, behind which stands Deggin, the bursar. There is a sign by the counter that reads, "Wait your turn!" Two ogres are currently haggling with the bursar over the worth of a small bag of gems (a total of eight assorted ornamental gems worth 5–10 gp each). An alert 3+6 HD duergar guard (see area **1a** for statistics) stands on each side of the door.

Deggin keeps a coffer containing 2,000–2,500 gp behind the counter. In addition, there is a large, closed wooden box with a hole in its top behind him. When an item's worth has been agreed upon, the bursar drops it in the box. The item is then immediately *teleported* to the chieftain's quarters (area **20h**). The box itself is of little value. It cannot be "reprogrammed" to *teleport* an item anywhere but to the chieftain's quarters. Only small, inanimate objects can be *teleported* in this manner.

If anyone presents Deggin with something so valuable (worth 2,000 gp or more) that he believes Dunmudden would like to investigate himself, he sends that person with one of the guards and a writ of entrance to area **20d**.

At the first sign of trouble, Deggin snatches up the coffer containing the gold, twists his *ring of teleportation*, blinks to area **17**, and alerts the Captain of the Guard. Any combat in the bursar's office results in all the occupants of area **2a** arriving in three rounds.

A door leads to the back room where the bursar lives. It is spare and simple: a bed, a table, a chair, a trunk. The trunk contains his personal belongings plus a pouch containing 2–12 gp.

Deggin, male duergar F1: AC 8; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA stealth, spells; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 420; *MM*/96; *ring of teleportation* (12 charges), leather armor, dagger.

Ogres (2): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 18, 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (or by weapon type +6); SA +2 to hit with weapon; SZ L; ML 11; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/272; spiked club (Dmg 2d4+6); pouch with gems (see above).

6. Corral. The duergar kavalrach, or spider-riders, keep their mounts here when they are not being ridden. The door leading to this area is locked; each kavalrach has a key. The tunnel connecting each "cell" is nine feet high. The cells themselves, however, are twenty feet high, allowing the spiders more room to crawl about. Each spider is the personal mount for one kavalrach; anyone except that spider's kavalrach is attacked immediately upon entering the cell. Therefore, only the kavalrach possesses the key to his mount's cell. Presently, many of the cells are empty; only areas **6e**, **6h**, **6j** and **6l** contain spiders.

The cells are sparse; the contents, if any, are the bones of past meals. Area **6b** still contains a recently-shed steeder exoskeleton.

Steeders (4 currently, 12 at full capacity): AC 4; MV 12; HD 4+4; hp 23 each; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA leap, secretion; SZ L (8' diameter); ML 13; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 975; *MM*/326.

7. Hatchery. The door to this area is unlocked. Presently, this room contains only the brittle remains of three spider eggs in one corner. When in use, it serves as the hatchery for the female steeders.

8. Market Square.

> You hear a tremendous commotion ahead. The buildings give way to an open market filled with an assortment of Underdark denizens purchasing an incredible variety of goods. Duergar merchants hawking their wares call out to the throng, while the patrons haggle loudly for a better price.

This shaded area is the focal point for the entire compound. The Market Square is filled with small stands and tents where most of the duergar in this compound have shops. Each tent or stand sells specific items: weapons, armor, chests and boxes, wagon wheels, spices, gourds, and so on. Also notable here are a great many "above ground" goods: cheese, wool, cotton, ivory, fruit (nearly rotted, but the Underdarkers don't know that), wood (very hard to come by in the Underdark), plus other assorted goods.

Presently, in addition to the forty merchants, there are another 60–80 duergar of other clans looking to buy goods. Other consumers include three ogres, fifteen gnolls, five orcs, two goblins, and two humans (see below for details). Patrolling the square are two groups of elite guards riding steeder spiders. This is a place where the PCs, even in human form, might "lose" their pursuers. The market is crowded and loud, and no one except the guards pays much attention to anything but one's own affairs and money pouch.

Should the PCs wish to buy something specific, use the equipment list in the *PH* as a guide. If it is something that might reasonably be found or made in the Underdark, increase the price by 25%; if it is something that would probably be found only above ground, increase the price by 200%.

Each merchant has anywhere from 30–300 gp with him at a given time. Robbing these merchants is not easy. They are always alert for cutpurses. Thieves suffer a –20% penalty to their Pick Pockets rolls. Anyone caught harassing or robbing a merchant must deal with the mounted guards who arrive within 1 round using the leaping abilities of their mounts.

The two humans are Pilnius and Freedper, thieves from Griswald who are looking to buy something interesting with the money they have just made selling some stolen goods. They are stupid and talkative, and, if the PCs are in human form, approach them and start bantering. This draws the attention of the guards, who are always suspicious of humans. The duergar immediately assume that the PCs of conducting some clandestine meeting and move to intercept them.

Ogres (3): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (or by weapon type +6); SA +2 to hit with weapon; SZ L; ML 11; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/272, club, pouch with 4–24 gp.

Gnolls (15): AC 5; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon

type; SZ L; ML 11; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 35; *MM*/158; broadsword, 3–12 gp.

Orcs (5): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/281; scimitar, 6–36 sp.

Goblins (2): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 6, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 10; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/163; shortsword, 3–18 sp.

Pilnius, male human T5: AC 6; MV 12; hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10; ML 12; AL LE; XP 270; leather armor, *shortsword +1, ring of protection +1*, 10 pp in pouch in boot.

Thief abilities: PP 55%, OL 60%, FRT 35%, MS 40%, HS 30%, DN 20%, CW 90%, RL 0%.

Freedper, male human T6: AC 5; MV 12; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 7, Cha 11; ML 12; AL LE; XP 420; *leather armor +1, dagger +2*, longsword, 15 pp in money belt.

Thief Abilities: PP 50%, OL 55%, FRT 55%, MS 35%, HS 35%, DN 30%, CW 90%, RL 15%.

9. Nursery. This is the nursery, where the little duergar run amok and are cared for, more or less, by the female duergar. There are fifty smaller beds for the children and fifty larger ones for the adult females. Little duergar toys are scattered everywhere—the dried head of giant rat, animal bones, toy picks and shields, dice, and clubs. Boxes of clothes and household goods are stacked here and there. There are twenty duergar females (AC 10; hp 5 each) in the domicile, with the rest taking part in the bartering outside.

The women and the children are noncombatants; however, should the PCs seek to harm the children, the females pick up daggers and clubs and do their best to defend the nursery while one runs to alert the guards patrolling the Market Square. Absolutely no experience points should be given for harming the females or the children.

If the PCs rummage through the boxes of belongings, they discover that one contains a silver hand mirror worth 45 gp, and another contains a silver jewelry box (empty) worth 65 gp. These items, however, require 3–12 rounds to find.

10. Male Duergar Living Area. Seventy crude beds are arranged here with boxes containing duergar belongings. The males are less trusting of each other than the females, so these boxes are locked, although the duergar still carry their coins on their person at all times. Presently, there are only fifteen males in this area: five sleeping, five sitting on boxes having an argument, and another five playing a dice game in the corner. (See non-warrior duergar for statistics.) Nonduergar entering this area are told to leave immediately. If this request is not met, nine of the awake duergar attack while one alerts the guards in area **8**.

Each duergar has a pouch containing 2–8 gp. In addition, the kitty to the dice game has 14 gp and 2 pp in it. What's more, a flagstone in the northeast corner is loose. Beneath it is a locked strongbox containing 255 gp and 56 pp. This is the secret stash of five duergar.

11. Male Duergar Living Area. This room is identical to area **10** except there are only nine duergar here, all quite awake and all quite drunk (THAC0 21). They are sharing a large jug of strong, unpleasant mead. Any nonduergar is greeted with hostility and attacked on sight. PCs disguised as duergar are asked to join them in a drink. Refusal results in expulsion from the living area.

12. Fat Traveler Ale House. This small bar provides "refreshments" for the nonduergar patrons of the market. No self-respecting duergar save the proprietor set foot in the place. There is a bar along the north wall and a set of stairs behind it leading down to the cellar where the ale is stored and brewed. There are a dozen tables and chairs in the sitting area. For an exorbitant price, a nonduergar may purchase a mug of ale (5 sp) and a slab of dried meat of unidentifiable origin (6 sp).

Presently, there are only four orcs and one bugbear enjoying the hospitality of Regren, the duergar owner of the establishment. Humans entering the place are frowned at but not attacked immediately. Duergar entering this bar are directed to area **13**.

Regren, male duergar F2: AC 8; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 650; *MM*/96; leather armor, pick, pouch with 20 gp.

Orcs (4): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/281; scimitar, 6–24 sp.

Bugbear: AC 5; M 9; HD 3+1; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +2 (due to Strength); SA surprise; SZ L; ML 11; INT average (10); AL CE; XP 120; *MM*/32; chainmail, battle-ax, purse with 32 sp and 19 gp.

13. Duergar Dining Area. This is where duergar residents and nonresidents come to eat. There are ten 15'-long tables with benches arranged about the room. The kitchen is toward the northeast; here most of the food is prepared in an enormous fireplace that sends smoke belching up into the compound. More nasty duergar mead is also brewed here and sold to any nonresident duergar for 2 sp per mug; it is free to residents.

The stream flows directly through this building, with small gaps in the north and south walls to accommodate it. There are also two small wood bridges so duergar cross the stream without having to jump it. The duergar are not a sentimental lot, however, and if one of their ranks should drink too much mead and fall into the stream, perhaps striking his head on the stone floor on the way, well, so be it. The stream is handy for housekeeping as well. The cooks and diners dump all refuse into the water to be carried out into the Underdark.

At the moment, there are ten duergar eating lunch here. The duergar cook, his three assistants, and four serving duergar are in the kitchen. They fight with meat cleavers for 1d6 points of damage.

Duergar coming here are served hot meals of Underdark vegetation and rothé beef. Residents are fed for free, and nonresidents must pay 1 gp for the meal. Nonduergar entering this area are ordered to leave immediately.

14. Armory. Most of the weapons and armor for the duergar guards are forged here. (The rest are plundered.) The west half of the building is the workshop

where five duergar are hard at work: a weaponsmith, an armorer, and three assistants.

The back half of the armory is used for storage. Here can be found fifteen suits of duergar chainmail, twenty suits of duergar leather armor, twenty-five shields, forty-eight footman's picks, fifteen light crossbows, fifty bolts, and six warhammers. All of these are either hung on the walls or stored in unlocked boxes.

The weaponsmith does, however, have a secret treasure. The box holding fifty crossbow bolts has a false bottom containing six small gold nuggets. Sold to a jeweler, these could fetch between 10–60 gp each.

Weaponsmith and **Armorer, male duergar F3**: AC 7; MV 6; HD 3+6; hp 24, 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 975; *MM*/96; studded leather armor, hammer, pouch with 3–12 gp.

15. Storehouse. Two duergar guards (same statistics as area **1a**) stand on either side of the locked door to this building. No one without authority or written permission from the Commander of the Guard (area **17**) or Dunmudden himself is allowed in the storehouse.

The storehouse is piled high with assorted odds and ends the duergar consider valuable enough to keep: a carriage, two chariots, piles of human and demihuman-sized armor (PCs have a 50% chance of finding a suit of leather armor, chainmail, or platemail that fits), a rack of polearms, boxes of mining equipment, ten row boats, twenty-five oars, 165 blankets, and sixteen cots. There are other items here, but nothing of great value to the PCs.

If the PCs spend at least three turns searching the storeroom, they discover, buried under the blankets in the northeast corner and wrapped in a plain cloth towel, a *longsword +2*. This is the private find of one of the duergar guards.

Note that this warehouse is watched at all times. Therefore, should the PCs dispose of the two guards, hide the bodies, and begin a search of the building and its contents, it isn't long before a duergar patrol comes along, sees that the building is unguarded, and investigates.

16. Doors to Barracks and Chieftain's Palace. This area of the compound is surrounded by a 10' high stone wall. In the center of the east wall is a set of double doors that are kept bolted from the inside at all times.

Two elite duergar guards stand outside the doors, and a third stands just inside the gates. If anyone wishes to enter through these doors, they must be either a member of the guard or have a writ from the bursar (area **5**). If the outside guards deem the person or persons worthy of passing through the doors, they knock twice, and the guard inside lifts the bolt.

A direct assault on these doors or against these guards would be unwise. Any sound of a struggle gains the immediate attention of the inside guard, who, after sliding open a small peep hole to see exactly who or what is causing the trouble, runs to get reinforcements. The reinforcements (see areas **17–18**) arrive in three rounds.

Elite guards, male duergar F4 (3): AC 1; MV 6; HD 4+8; hp 30, 29, 26; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic; spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 1,400; *MM*/96; platemail, *shield +1, footman's pick +1*, pouch with 3–12 gp.

17 & 18. Barracks. Each of these barracks houses twenty-five 2+4 HD duergar, but only fifteen are present at any given time. (The rest are on patrol.) Area **17** also houses the Commander of the Guard, Kamulak, while area **18** houses three 4+8 HD elite guards (see area **16** for statistics). The Captain and elite guards are actually housed in separate quarters (areas **17a** and **18a** respectively).

The duergar guards sleep in beds lined up in even rows with a foot locker by each. There is a large table with chairs and mugs in the center of the barracks. If there is any trouble in either of these areas or from area **16**, one duergar is sent to warn the occupants of area **20**.

If the PCs are captured or detained for any reason, they are brought to area **17a** for questioning. Commander Kamulak tries to determine if they intend to rob Dunmudden. Should their answers be unsatisfactory, they are taken to area **19**.

Kamulak's footlocker in area **17a** is locked and contains his personal belongings and a small wooden box containing five vials: a potion of *hill giant strength*, a potion of *extra-healing*, a potion of *speed*, a poison potion (Type I; –2 to save), and *oil of fumbling*.

Guards, male duergar F2 (15 per building): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 650; *MM*/96; chainmail, small wooden shield, pick, light crossbow.

Commander Kamulak, male duergar P6/T6: AC 4; M 6; HD 6+6; hp 33; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 3,000; *MM*/96; *leather armor +2, footman's mace +1*.

Thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 45%, FRT 55%, MS 55%, HS 45%, DN 30%, CW 80%, RL 30%.

Spells (5/4/2): 1st—*bestow curse, cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good, cause fear*; 2nd—*know alignment, charm person or mammal, hold person, silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*cause disease, prayer*.

19a. The Pit. The pit is where all spies, cutpurses, and wrongdoers are hurled while they await Dunmudden's justice (usually death by beheading or slave labor). The oak door to area **19a** is iron bound and double locked. The jail keepers in area **19b** have the keys. The floor to this room is 10 feet below the threshold of the door, and prisoners are simply dumped unceremoniously onto the stone floor.

The pit contains nothing but a slop bucket, offal, and, presently, one **orc** (AC 10; HD 1; hp 4), two nonresident **duergar** (AC 10; HD 1+2; hp 4, 3), and one **hobgoblin** (AC 10; HD 1+1; hp 2). They are starving, tired, and demoralized.

19b. Jailers. This room contains a desk, two chairs, and two jail keepers (same statistics as the duergar guards in areas **17** and **18**). Both keepers possess copies of the keys to area **19a**. There is also a large, unlocked chest containing two suits of leather armor, two suits of duergar chainmail, a scimitar, a battle-ax, two footman's picks, and three small metal shields. These are the personal belongings of the prisoners in area **19a**.

Captured PCs are brought before the jailers, stripped of all their belongings (which are then placed in the trunk), and thrown into area **19a**.

Dunmudden's Palace

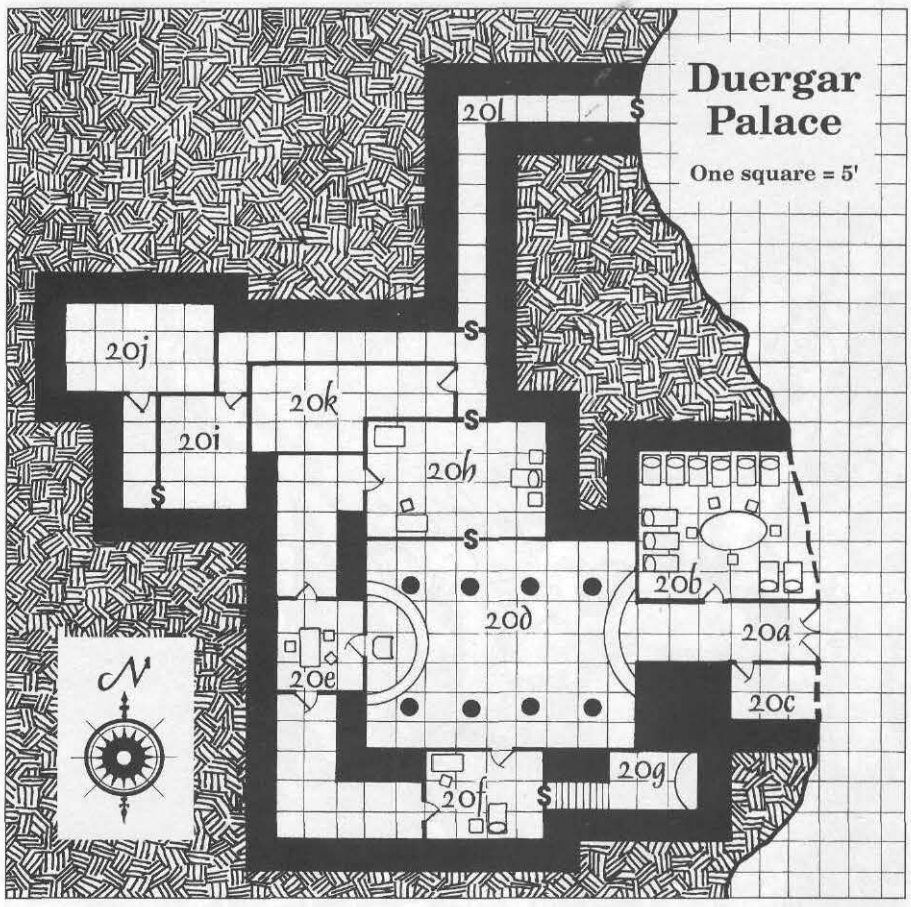
20a. Entrance. The entrance to the palace is blocked by a set of oak double doors reinforced with iron and barred from the inside. A single duergar guard stands just inside the closed doors. A single, covered peephole allows the guard to identify anyone seeking an audience with Dunmudden.

The doors can be opened with a *knock* spell and can withstand 100 points of damage before sundering.

Anyone wishing to enter who is not accompanied by someone known to the guard is checked by Dernfall, Dunmudden's advisor, first. If the PCs request entry, the guard fetches Dernfall in area **20f**. Dernfall arrives in three rounds, questions whomever wants to enter, and, if he deems it appropriate, casts a *know alignment* spell. If the PCs fail to pass muster, Dernfall warns Dunmudden while the lone guard alerts the duergar in the barracks (area **20b**).

Elite guard, male duergar F4: AC 2; MV 6; HD 4+8; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magic, stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 13; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 1,400; *MM/96*; platemail, shield, footman's pick, pouch with 3–12 gp.

20b. Barracks. The chieftain keeps a small detachment of his elite guard here as a last defense against intruders. A total of eleven 4+8 HD duergar are housed here: three are keeping guard at area **16**, one is at area **20a**, three are here (with heavy crossbows), two occupy area **20c**, and two more dwell in area **20d**.



There are five arrow slits on the eastern wall of this room. If Dunmudden's palace is being threatened, the four duergar here (same stats as area **20a**) fire their crossbows through the arrow slits at any intruders. If it appears the doors at area **20a** are being breached, these guards fall back to area **20d** for a last defense.

As with all living areas, this room is sparse: eleven beds, eleven footlockers, a table, and chairs. The footlockers contain the duergars' personal effects but little of value.

20c. Guard Room. Two more elite guards (same stats as area **20a**) are stationed here with heavy crossbows. The eastern wall of this room has two arrow slits so these guards can fire on intruders outside.

20d. Grand Hall. Two stairs lead down into this long, wide hall. An arched ceiling 15 feet above is supported by eight elaborately engraved pillars. To the west, a stone throne sits atop a marble dais. The north and south walls are decorated with bas-reliefs depicting duergar faces in various expressions. Two elite guards, each with a steeder spider on a short leash, patrol this hall at all times. See area **20a** for the guards' statistics and area **6** for the steeders' statistics.

Should the PCs gain an audience with Dunmudden, this is where the meeting occurs. The two guards with steeders stand on either side of the PCs, while two more guards from area **20b** guard the entrance to the hall. Dernfall stands by the chieftain's side.

The northern secret door can by opened by depressing one of the reliefs. This relief also serves as a peephole for Dunmudden, who can peer through the stone visage's eyes at whoever has come to visit. Any fighting in this hall gains Dunmudden's immediate attention.

Likewise, Dernfall can peer through a relief's eyes in the southern wall just to

A duergar and his steeder mount guard the halls of Dunmudden's palace.

the east of the door leading to his chamber (area **20f**). If battle erupts and it does not appear absolutely hopeless, Dernfall joins the fray. If the fight looks desperate, he runs to Dunmudden's chambers to aid his leader's escape.

20e. Waiting Chamber. If Dunmudden wants a private audience, this is where it occurs. Private audiences, however, are usually reserved for persons with whom the chieftain is already familiar. The room is sparsely furnished: a stone desk and three wooden chairs. The desk has no drawers or other notable features.

20f. Dernfall's Chambers. The king's advisor, a 7th-level priest of Laduguer, resides here. Both doors to this chamber are locked, and Dernfall carries the keys with him on his belt. The room is plain and contains a bed, chest, desk, and chair. The desk is stone and has two drawers, the contents of which are useless to the PCs: notes to himself about matters upon which Dunmudden needs advising, financial records, reports on ineffective guards, and so forth. The chest is unlocked and contains personal items only. However, if the chest is moved aside and a search is made, the PCs discover a small stone that may be removed, revealing a depression. Within the depression is a small lever; when pulled, it opens the secret door on the east wall.

If the PCs surprise Dernfall in this room, he is sitting at his desk making notes. It is unlikely the PCs can pick the locks quickly or silently enough to surprise him, but should this happen, Dernfall immediately becomes *invisible* and attempts to flee through the nearest door. If he hears the door being picked or meddled with in any way, he becomes *invisible, melds into stone,* awaits the intruders, and then, after determining the intruders' strength, slips out to alert Dunmudden and the guards.

Dernfall, male duergar P7: AC 0; MV 6; hp 45; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA stealth, spells; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SZ S; ML 14; INT high (14); AL LE; XP 4,000; *MM/96*; *platemail* +2, shield, *footman's mace* +2.

Spells (5/5/4/1): 1st—*cause light wounds, cure light wounds* (×2), *darkness, protection from good*; 2nd—*aid, heat metal, know alignment, silence 15' radius, spiritual hammer*; 3rd—*animate dead, dispel magic, prayer*; 4th—*cure serious wounds*.

As a priest of Laduguer, Dernfall can *meld into stone* once per day.

20g. Dernfall's Sanctuary. A narrow set of stairs leads down ten feet to this small antechamber. This is where Dernfall comes every morning to pray for his spells. On the eastern wall is a small stone dais, atop which rests a 4' tall marble statue of the duergar deity, Laduguer. The statuette is hollow, and its compartment can be accessed by unscrewing the statue's head from its shoulders. Inside are a small diamond ring worth 500 gp and an ivory scroll case worth 25 gp. The scroll case contains a scroll with the spells *animate dead, cure serious wounds,* and *feign death* cast at 8th-level. Also, there is a silver medallion on a thick gold chain worth 300 gp. A *detect magic* spell reveals a dweomer denoting alteration magic. When worn by a duergar, this amulet bestows a one-hour +1 bonus to Dexterity. This effect occurs but once a day. If it is worn by a nonduergar, it has the opposite effect, except that the effect is permanent. Only a *remove curse, limited wish,* or *restoration* spell can restore the wearer's Dexterity.

20h. Dunmudden's Chambers. If, somehow, the PCs reach this area undetected, Dunmudden is encountered here alone, examining some of the day's spoils. If any trouble occurs within the palace, however, it is likely that he learns of it, whether by messenger or simply by peering through the secret door in the south wall leading to area **20d**. In this case, he grabs his battleax and crossbow and runs to the source of the trouble. If there is time, he goes to area **20k** to fetch his gorgon before battling the PCs. If he fares poorly in combat with the PCs, he turns *invisible* and retreats to his treasure room to gather up some of his most expensive trinkets, then heads out the secret door (area **20l**) and flees into the Underdark.

The chamber contains a bed, two wooden trunks, a desk, and a chair. In the northwest corner, resting atop a stone table, is a large (4' × 3' × 2') iron box with double doors on its southern face. This is the second half of the teleportation device used by Deggin, the bursar (see area **5** for details). Anything dropped in the bursar's box is instantly *teleported* here. There is nothing Dunmudden enjoys more than pouring over trinkets blinked into his parlor. Presently, there are six medium-sized chunks of obsidian worth 50 gp each, 10 unimpressive gold rings each worth between 50–100 gp, two gold candlestick holders each worth 100 gp, and a pair of emerald-encrusted eye glasses worth 3,000 gp.

The desk is stone and has sheets of parchment, quills, and jars of ink on it. Dunmudden uses the desk and its paraphernalia to tally his net worth. All wealth, with the exception of a few gold coins shared by the duergar community, goes straight to Dunmudden. What Dunmudden plans to do with the loot, no one knows; to the best of anyone's knowledge, he has never spent a copper piece.

If Dunmudden is ever trapped, if his guards are dropping quickly, and if his hit points are reduced by 50%, he begins to bargain. He offers the PCs riches and magic—whatever they desire. He tries to convince them to take something other than the amulet. If they tell him why they need it, he points out that the fate of Griswald and Rikard should mean nothing to them, and he gladly doubles whatever Griswald offered for the amulet's return. If the PCs don't budge and Dunmudden knows he is doomed otherwise, he relinquishes the amulet.

Each trunk is locked and guarded by a *glyph of warding* (inflicting 7d4 points of electrical damage) cast by Dernfall. The first trunk contains two sacks, each containing 1,000 gp, and a velvet pouch holding 53 pp. The second trunk contains a silver box (worth 125 gp) holding four potions: *extra-healing, speed, flying,* and *protection from normal missiles*. He also keeps a *shield +1* in here, six *heavy bolts +2,* and a *footman's pick +1*.

The keys to the trunks, as well as the keys to areas **20i** and **20j**, are located in the seat of his chair. Close examination of the chair reveals that the back is hinged. The seat can be lifted, revealing the four keys. All are nestled in specially carved grooves so they do not jingle or rattle when the chair is moved or tipped over. The two keys to the trunks and the key to area **20i** are normal keys. The fourth "key" is just a three-inch long, one-inch diameter steel cylinder. See area **20j** for details on its use.

The secret door in the south wall is clearly visible from Dunmudden's chamber. The secret door in the north can be found by removing a small stone in the wall, revealing the door's handle.

Dunmudden, male duergar F8: AC –1 (*platemail* +2, 16 Dexterity); MV 6; HD 8+8; hp 56; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); SA stealth; SD +4 bonus to saving throws vs. poison and magic, spell immunity; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; Str 16 (+1/+1), Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14 (15 with Griswald's *amulet*), Wis 10, Cha 14 (15 with Griswald's *amulet*); SZ S; ML 13; AL LE; XP 5,000; *MM/96; platemail* +2, *battleax* +2, heavy crossbow, six *heavy bolts* +2, Griswald's *amulet*. Dunmudden also wears a *ring of complete free action* that functions as a *ring of free action* with the added of ability of making the wearer immune to all *flesh to stone* attacks.

20i. False Treasure Room. The heavy oak door to this room is locked. (The key is in area **20h** or, if he is fleeing the compound, on Dunmudden himself.) Once the door is opened, read or paraphrase the following:

> Piled about this room are heaps of valuables: trunks overflowing with gems, coins, jewelry, gold goblets, figurines, swords, and gleaming suits of armor. It would take a small caravan to haul everything out!

Dunmudden has gone to great lengths to create this false treasure room. Every valueless goblet or sword or fake gem that passes through the bursar's hands is brought here. All the coins (20,000 or so in total) are copper. The gems are glass, the jewelry is costume, the goblets are painted gold. The swords, shields, and armor have been rubbed with an ointment of magical dweomer, located in a large glass vial beneath a pile of copper in the southeast. When a small

amount is applied to any object, it gives off a strong magical dweomer. The total value of the hoard is 500 gp.

The secret door in the west is similar to the secret door in area **20h**.

20j. Real Treasure Room. The door to this room is made of steel and has a door knob and standard keyhole. The keyhole, however, is a trap. The real key hole is hidden in a secret panel embedded in the center of the door. If opened, this panel reveals a one-inch diameter hole, into which the steel, cylindrical "key" from area **20h** may be inserted. When this is done, it releases a series of iron bolts that hold the door shut. When the bolts are in place, it is impossible to force the door open. A *knock* spell opens it, but thieves suffer a –50% penalty to their Open Locks rolls.

Attempting to open the door without the real key sets off a trap. The keyhole lock is an actual lock, though fairly easy (+20%) to pick. If a thief manages to pick this "false" lock and the handle is turned, the door does not budge, but a 10' × 10' pit directly in front of the door snaps open. The pit's lid swivels on a central axis. Any weight on the floor causes it to spin 360 degrees, dropping PCs into the 20'-deep pit for 2d6 points of damage. The lid then locks back into place. The stone covering the pit is two feet thick, and the only way to free the occupants of the pit aside from a *knock*, *transmute rock to mud*, or similar spell is with the release button hidden in a secret panel on the south wall of the treasure room.

The room's contents are impressive. Dunmudden hoards everything but is not particularly tidy. Thus, coins, gems, trinkets, sculptures—all are heaped together in a disorganized manner.

Hiding on the ceiling above the doorway, however, is a lurker, kept here by Dunmudden as a last defense against thieves. Dunmudden gives a special whistle when he enters the treasure room. Anyone not giving this whistle is immediately dropped upon as they set foot in the treasure room.

Should the PCs dispose of the lurker, the DM should not let them simply hunker down and take their time picking through the loot. A PC may gather 1d4 items or 1d100+100 coins per round. Meanwhile, any duergar still alive in the palace converge on the room to prevent the heroes from fleeing with the loot. The contents of the room are as follows:

- 26,435 sp, 6,047 ep, 3,140 gp, and 947 pp in loose coinage;
- 350 gems: 150 × 10 gp; 100 × 25 gp; 50 × 50 gp; 25 × 100 gp; 25 × 500 gp;
- 100 assorted pieces of jewelry: 50 × 100 gp, 25 × 250 gp, 15 × 500 gp, and 10 × 1,000 gp;
- 35 goblets worth 20–200 gp;
- Six gold hand mirrors (250 gp each);
- Ten framed paintings, each 4' × 4', worth between 10–1,000 gp each;
- Three gold statuettes of a mermaid, female elf, and wolf respectively, worth 250 gp each;
- A *handax +2*, *longsword +1*, ten *sheaf arrows +2*, and a suit of *chainmail +2* (human-sized);
- A *bag of holding*, buried under coins in the northwest corner. Dunmudden uses this to gather up his most precious items before making his escape.

If the PCs emerge from the palace laden with loot, they won't get far. Let the PCs grab some stuff, maybe even something special of your choosing, then bring on the reinforcements!

Lurker: AC 6; MV 1, fly 9 (B); HD 10; hp 42; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA surprise, suffocation; SZ H; ML 11; INT non (0); AL N; XP 2,000; *MM*/229.

20k. Gorgon Lair. Dunmudden keeps a *charmed* miniature gorgon here as a pet. Only four feet tall, this hybrid gorgon fights just as fiercely and possesses the same breath weapon ability as a normal-sized gorgon. Dunmudden feeds him personally (relying on his magical *ring* to keep from being turned to stone) and delights in parading his "pet" through the compound occasionally. In return, the gorgon is as loyal as a sheep dog, defending Dunmudden to the death. Anyone other than Dunmudden entering this area is attacked on sight.

The gorgon sleeps on a bed of straw in the northeast corner. Human, duergar, and humanoid bones litter the floor.

Vozer (small gorgon): AC 2; MV 9; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA breath weapon; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/172.

20l. Dunmudden's Escape Tunnel. Only Dunmudden and Dernfall know about this secret passage out. It leads to a secret door that opens into the cavern just north of the compound. Dunmudden uses this as a last resort.

Getting Out

Once the PCs have the amulet, getting back to Griswald can be as difficult as the DM wishes. The DM might have the PCs pursued by a band of elite guards (assuming any are still alive) riding steeders. Or, if the DM wishes, the magic of Andwin's rings can simply expire at a particularly inopportune time, thereby forcing one final conflict. Also, attempting to leave with armloads of goodies from Dunmudden's treasure vault certainly draws immediate attention.

Once back in the Underdark proper, the DM may choose encounters from the "Random Underdark Encounters" table if he or she so wishes.

Concluding the Adventure

Griswald can stall Rikard for one week. If the PCs have not returned with the amulet in this time, war erupts between the two fiefdoms. If this occurs, the DM is free to play out this scenario as desired. Perhaps the PCs fight in the war as part of Griswald's army; perhaps they slink off in shame.

If the PCs retrieve the amulet in time to appease Rikard, Griswald happily pays them the 1,000 gp and offers them positions in his army. Should they accept their positions, each PC receives 250 gp a year, and they could be called upon up to three times yearly to perform their "duties." These could include anything from spying to assassination to hunting down a criminal.

If the PCs successfully return the amulet in time, the entire party should receive a 10,000 XP story bonus. If they managed to sneak in and out of the duergar compound without any significant conflict, the DM might award an additional 2,000–5,000 XP to compensate for XP lost through combat. Extra awards might be given for good roleplaying. Ω

☛ **The PCs surprise the covey.** If PCs learn about the covey and can prevent the hags from learning their true intent, they can attack the caves and take the covey by surprise.

PCs can learn the caves' whereabouts by capturing and interrogating a merrow or scrag, by investigating the area (and making successful Tracking proficiency checks), or through magical means. PCs need only listen to Evan's final prophecy to estimate the caves' location, and most villagers are aware of the ruined keep that lies north of Kellorville.

If the hags are caught flat-footed, they are most likely in area **32** or **33**, discussing plans or working magic. The merrow and scrags normally stay in areas **35**, **36**, and the swamp. The ogre and goblin guards remain in areas **38** and **39** until called. Merrow or scrags in the swamp spot unconcealed PCs 25% of the time, giving the covey some warning (1–4 turns at most) by entering through the underwater entrance (area **36**).

An attack on the lair is met with strong resistance by the hags. They attempt to raise an alarm, bringing any remaining allies within 2–5 rounds. If encountered this way, Mentonia has the *wand of frost* and does not hesitate to use it, even if one of her allies stands in the way of its effect. The grell in area **34** is released as soon as possible. The hags rely on initial spell attacks followed by melee combat. To distract opponents, the hags cast *audible glamer* in an empty corridor (producing the sound of approaching monsters). Any retreats are covered by *fog clouds* if possible. The covey flees to area **42** if they lose four or more scrags or merrow.

☛ **The covey attacks the town.** The final option occurs if the characters foil the hags' plot but do not venture to the caves. If this occurs, the hags employ a ruse similar to the second option above. Most likely the PCs would know or suspect the hags' presence and find one or more of their allies. The hags and remaining merrow and scrags conceal their true identity under a *veil* spell, posing as common farmers. Five goblins, also *veiled*, appear as two scrags and three green-skinned hags. The "common farmers" appear as a husband, wife, and any number of children fleeing from and attack. They run down the north road yelling for help. Should characters assist, the *veiled* goblins arrive the following round. The goblins' poor combat ability gives away their true natures, so Mentonia rapidly hits PCs with a *cone of cold* from the *wand* as Gordelly and Lythia attempt to inflict *weakness* on any fighters.

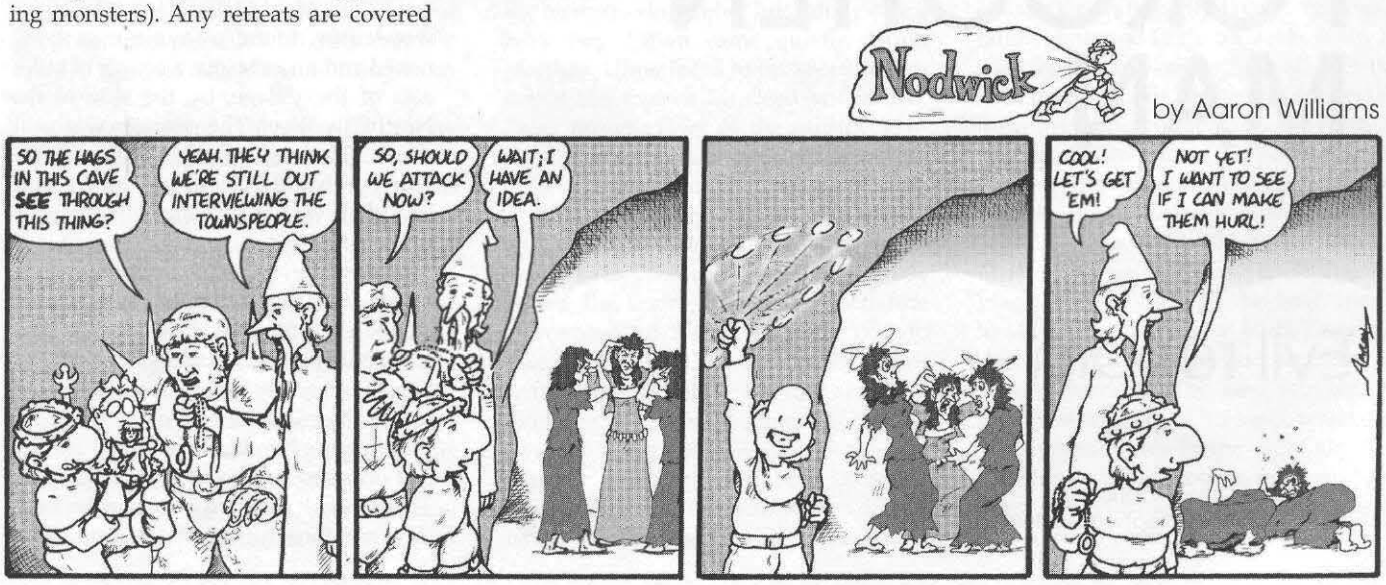
After the initial spell assault, the scrags and merrow engage in melee, with Mentonia keeping characters at bay with *fog cloud*, *ice storm*, or her formidable melee abilities. The scrags and merrow flee if four or more are slain, but the hags continue to fight until their morale completely fails. They retreat by water if they can, under cover of *fog clouds* if Mentonia is alive and able.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the covey is broken, the threat to the town is over. The weather breaks after about eight hours, revealing clear skies. Any remaining undead in the forests pose no real danger but can be easily tracked, turned, and eliminated. The villagers are grateful for the PCs' assistance. The town offers each PC the finest cloaks, tunics, and hosen, all made of Kellorville wool. The PCs are also offered the services of any craftsman in town free of charge. Labgum complains about this, but he still does whatever work the PCs require.

The events deeply upset Evan, and it takes him time to recover. The hags used powerful magic on him, and explaining their trickery to him and the town stifles feelings of hostility anyone might harbor for the poor man. Beryl can be of particular assistance here, looking out for Evan so the PCs need not worry over his fate.

Aside from the XP for defeating the hags and their covey, PCs who foil the plot before the village flees to the caves should earn an additional 5,000 XP for completing an important story goal. Spotting the *hag eye* and/or using it to fool the covey earns an additional 1,000–3,000 XP, at the DM's discretion. Further adventures can be had in the forest to the east—perhaps cleaning out other hostile monsters that the covey stirred up. The caved-in stairway at area **42** could also lead to other dungeon levels beneath the now-ruined keep. Ω


Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
SO THE HAGS IN THIS CAVE SEE THROUGH THIS THING?
YEAH. THEY THINK WE'RE STILL OUT INTERVIEWING THE TOWNSPEOPLE.
SO, SHOULD WE ATTACK NOW?
WAIT; I HAVE AN IDEA.
COOL! LET'S GET 'EM!
NOT YET! I WANT TO SEE IF I CAN MAKE THEM HURL!

A puppet show reenacts the battle between champions of light and darkness.

THE FORGOTTEN MAN

BY STEVE DEVANEY

Evil reborn

Artwork by David Kooharian
Cartography by Stephen Daniele

Steve is a creative fellow—musician, artist, and 3D animation software aficionado with a B.A. in Chinese (Mandarin). He would like to thank Veronica, who corrects his spelling, and fellow gamers John and Michele.

"The Forgotten Man" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4–5 PCs of levels 6–8 (about 35 total levels). Each character class should be represented, and a priest or ranger would be especially useful. The party should be predominantly good-aligned.

This adventure focuses on Gethirah Kugothan (also known as Michael), a formerly evil man who has lost his memory and has since taken up residence in a church of the god of rebirth and renewal. The premise of the adventure hinges on the possibility that such a man can be turned from the path of evil and become good. The main goal of the PCs is to keep Gethirah from becoming the man he used to be. Gethirah's special abilities are explained in the "Key NPCs" sidebar.

With a little modification, this module can be placed in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting or another campaign. If the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is used, the Phoenix should be substituted with Lathander, the Martyr should become Ilmater, and Darkness should be replaced with Bane, Cyric, or Kelemvor.

For the Dungeon Master

The riverside village of Stillwater has taken in an unusual guest. Two months ago, Old Man Halland, the village's woodcutter, found a young man lying naked and unconscious a couple of miles east of the village, by the side of the Northflow River. The stranger was near death. Halland gently wrapped the youth in his old cloak, laid him on the bed of his wagon, and brought him back to the village priest.

When the villagers saw the young man's face, they immediately felt great compassion for him. His fair skin and long, pale blond hair seemed to have an almost unearthly beauty. Joseph, a priest of the Phoenix, the god of rebirth, took him into his humble church and let him rest on a bed in a room behind the altar. There Joseph watched over him for three days and three nights. On the morning of

the fourth day, the young man opened his eyes.

When news spread that the stranger had awakened, the villagers flocked to the church to meet him and learn who he was. Joseph met them at the door and told them that his guest was far too tired to receive visitors. When they asked the priest what the young man's name was, Joseph only shook his head and said, "He has forgotten."

Days went by, and the young man, whom the villagers began to call Michael (after a famous paladin of the same name), soon regained his strength. Joseph invited Michael to live in the church. In return, Michael helped the old priest with the daily chores. In the evenings, Michael sat by the fire with Joseph and studied the writings of the Phoenix.

Many of the villagers soon grew to admire the young man, whose heart seemed warm and sincere. He often helped tend to the village's sheep or repair the thatch in the roofs of some of the older cottages. Within weeks, Michael became an esteemed member of the community.

Now, two months later, winter has come. Snow covers the thatched roofs of the cottages, and icicles hang from the branches of fir trees. With the coming of winter, Michael has become withdrawn and depressed, discouraged that his memory hasn't returned. If he could remember his true identity, Stillwater would be in a grievous state. Michael is actually Gethirah Kugothan, a powerful and evil anti-paladin who died over 500 years ago and has since returned from the dead.

Many years ago there lived a powerful necromancer named Luther Meiron. In Luther's citadel stood a statue of a beautiful man, sculpted of the whitest alabaster. This statue was actually an evil artifact that enabled Luther to speak to the god Darkness. The statue instructed Luther to seek a woman of noble blood for the purpose of breeding a powerful servant for the god. This servant would grow to become the leader of armies and bring torment to the land. Luther sent his servants to find such a woman.

Elaine was the wife of Baron Matthew Ulmade. Baron Ulmade's castle was constructed on an island of rock above the edge of a terraced waterfall known as the Old Warden. The Baron's family, including his younger brother Eric, a traveling minstrel of some renown, inhabited the castle for many years. Unbeknownst to Baron Ulmade, Eric had secretly formed an alliance with Luther Meiron, becoming one of Darkness's most devout worshipers, as well as Luther's best student in the black arts.

One night, a horde of raiders from the east side of the Hardcobble Mountains attacked Ulmade Castle. The ensuing battle lasted until dawn and left many dead on the battlefield, but the castle remained Ulmade's.

While Ulmade was on the battlefield, a stranger visited Elaine. This visitor, in the form of a handsome young man in courtly attire, was actually an incubus summoned by Eric, as Luther instructed. Elaine was puzzled yet charmed by the mysterious gentleman; eventually, the incubus succeeded in seducing the Baroness. When the Baron returned to Ulmade Castle, Elaine was pregnant with the child of the incubus. Elaine soon became distant and withdrawn. By the eighth month of her pregnancy, she had become completely catatonic. The Baron himself became reclusive and ill. On many occasions, the castle servants witnessed him talking to himself, and rumors of his crumbling sanity began to spread.

Elaine gave birth on a night that raged with storm. She died shortly after the birth, leaving in her husband's care a baby boy. Dawn came quietly. Baron Matthew Ulmade fell to his knees, weeping at the foot of his dead wife's bed. From the shadows of the outside hallway, Eric watched his lamenting brother with cold indifference.

Ulmade was overcome with madness, and he blamed the child for his wife's death. In an uncontrollable rage, Ulmade seized the crying boy and raised him above his head. Screaming to the gods to take back the child who had killed his wife, he staggered to the window, intending to throw the infant out into the river and over the waterfall. But before Ulmade could kill the boy, Darkness himself touched Ulmade with a frozen hand, delivering a horrific curse. Before the wide eyes of his brother, servants, and private guards, Baron Ulmade collapsed, his body contorting into the shape of a huge wolf. The child fell harmlessly to the floor, and the wolf attacked the castle servants and guards before escaping to the valley forest.

Ulmade Valley became just another remote, seldom-visited corner of world. The castle servants returned to more civilized lands, leaving the Baron's brother Eric as the last remaining resident of Castle Ulmade. Eric sent the child to Luther's Keep, where he was brought before the statue of Darkness. The statue smiled and said, "You shall call him Gethirah Kugothan. His name shall mean Conqueror of Light."

Luther raised the child as the statue instructed. The boy grew up surrounded by the darkness of Luther's citadel, where he was taught to hate all living things. Luther summoned fiends to enchant the boy with unholy magic, while Luther's witches taught him the ways of darkness and power. When Gethirah reached adulthood, Luther gave him a magical staff that would allow him to animate the dead. (See "New Magical Item" sidebar.)

Gethirah left Luther's keep and began to gather his own minions, with which he planned to bring death and destruction to the kingdom. He intentionally deceived the nobles of the land by presenting himself as a faithful Paladin of the Martyr. His first deeds were noble and just, and he became well known as a chivalrous and goodly knight. His reputation grew, and Gethirah swore fealty to the king. Soon warriors from all over the land flocked to his banner. He created an army and called it the Legion of Faith.

Around this time, the people of the land began to succumb to a plague called the Yellow Death. The Yellow Death was actually a curse brought on them by Luther, by means of a *wish* spell. The vile plague ripped through the land, mercilessly killing many in its path. The kingdom's military might and morale had been devastated. The king retreated to the inner sanctum of his keep, while outside funeral pyres lit the night sky. The kingdom was without a king, and the land was in turmoil. Gethirah's opportunity to seize control had finally come.

Secretly, Gethirah began to fill the heads of his followers with subtle lies. He told them that there was evil hidden in the land and that the king was too blind to see it for himself. This evil, he said, was responsible for the Yellow Death. Gethirah told his men that many of the kingdom's people secretly worshiped Darkness, and that the Yellow Death was brought upon the kingdom by these worshipers. He told his knights that it was their duty to destroy these worshipers of Darkness, because the king's other knights were as blind as the king himself. "How will we recognize these fiends?" they asked Gethirah.

Gethirah replied, "I will show you." The villain took advantage of their trust and deceived them into committing evil acts, for he thought, "What better way to do Darkness's bidding than to manipulate a group of good and just men into doing it for you?" Gethirah became a witch hunter. His men scoured the land, persecuting thousands of people, burning at the stake those accused of being in league with Darkness. Always Gethirah himself was the accuser, targeting all who questioned his judgment. The fires raged as Gethirah "cleansed" numerous towns and cities. His banner, a red dragon on a black background, became the symbol of fear in the kingdom.

Michael Lathendale, a paladin of the Martyr, finally led an attack against the Legion of Faith and defeated them. Gethirah met Michael on the battlefield. The two dueled fiercely, ultimately slaying each other. By the time the battle was finished, Michael's army had sustained great losses, but the Legion of Faith had been destroyed. Mysteriously, Gethirah's body was never found.

After the battle, rumors spread that Gethirah's army had contained undead warriors. After all, how could living men be responsible for such atrocities? These rumors were partially true—although Gethirah had successfully hidden his true nature from his followers for most of his campaign, in a final, desperate attempt to defeat Michael, Gethirah used the staff given to him by Luther to animate many of the victims slain on the battlefield.

One month later, one of Luther's servants confessed to a local sheriff, describing the worship of Darkness occurring in Luther's keep. The servant told of a great marble statue that spoke to Luther, telling him how to cause pain and strife among the kingdom's people. For the king, paranoia became the better part of self preservation, so he sent a second army to lay siege to Luther's Keep and bring it to the ground. The king's men found a statue fitting the servant's description and destroyed it. Luther was captured and brought to the king's castle, where he was tried for treason, convicted, and executed. Everyone thought the nightmare had ended, but it hadn't.

Luther's minions had prophesied that with the passing of five centuries, the good paladin Michael would be reincarnated in the form of a saintly knight of the Martyr. It was the will of Darkness that Gethirah seek out this incarnation of Michael and slay him before he could grow to adulthood.

Immediately following the battle with Michael, Gethirah's body had been retrieved by one of Luther's servants and *teleported* back to the necromancer's laboratory. There Luther's witches and priests anointed the villain's body with salves that would enable him to rise from the dead after the passing of 500 years, so he could face the reborn Michael.

Luther, sensing that his own doom was close at hand, *teleported* Gethirah's body to his birthplace, Castle Ulmade, and entombed him in a secret cavern near the Ulmade crypt. Luther then gave Eric a letter, informing him of his new responsibilities as Gethirah's guardian. With the letter came a magical scroll, as well as the proper spell components required to transform Eric into a lich. Eric used the scroll, casting the spell and changing himself into the immortal ward of Gethirah Kugothan. Eric would wait patiently for the passing of five centuries, at which time he would return to Gethirah's resting place and guide him in his task. When the kingdom would least expect it, Gethirah would awaken and the land would again cower under the shadow of Gethirah's banner.

That was the plan; but two things have happened that neither Luther nor Eric expected. First, as the time of Gethirah's awakening neared, Eric was attacked by a powerful priest of the Martyr named Joshuan, who, through dreams sent by his god, was aware of both the rebirth of Michael Lathendale and the existence of Gethirah Kugothan. Joshuan went to Castle Ulmade to destroy Eric and Gethirah. The priest died in his battle with Eric, but not before inflicting terrible damage to the lich. It was during this combat that Gethirah, hidden away in his tomb, opened his eyes for the first time in 500 years.

Secondly, Gethirah, after awakening from his deathlike sleep, has forgotten who he is. Having lost his memory, he did not expect the lich to be at his side when he woke; instead, he wandered out of his tomb. Eric was so damaged from his battle with Joshuan that he could do nothing but rest and repair himself. Now Eric is searching for Gethirah, planning to bring him back to his tomb and restore his memory. If the lich is successful, Gethirah will become a powerful nemesis to all that is good.

Starting the Adventure

A statue of a knight in full plate armor stands on an 8'-tall pedestal in the cobblestone square of the town where the PCs are staying. Plastered to the pedestal of this statue are numerous public notices. One of them reads:

> Village seeks brave men and women for protection against packs of wolves from the Hardcobble Mountains. Free room and board. One hundred gold pieces a week. One month obligation. Inquire in Stillwater, northeastern Axewood.

This ad was posted here by Old Man Halland, a villager of Stillwater during one of his yearly trips into town to buy and trade hard-to-find items for the rest of his village. Wolves coming down from the Hardcobble Mountains have been a problem for the villagers of Stillwater every winter. This year, their presence is particularly menacing.

Halland posted this notice without the approval of the other villagers—and without consideration of the village's financial situation. Also, his memory is poor, and by the start of the adventure, he has forgotten the notice entirely.

If the reward isn't enough to entice the PCs, the heroes are approached the next day by a priest of the Phoenix named Halen. (The DM should create statistics for him if necessary.) Halen has received a message from his god, telling him that "a terrible evil from the past has returned." For reasons he cannot explain, Halen believes that the evil lurks near Stillwater and asks the PCs to consult with Joseph, the resident Priest, and ensure the village's protection.

As the adventure begins, Eric has already begun searching for Gethirah using his *crystal ball*, calling upon a pack of worgs, dire wolves, and werewolves to scout the fringes of the Axewood.

Two important things should happen in the first half of the adventure. First, the PCs should get to know Gethirah (alias Michael), ideally developing a warm friendship with him. Second, the PCs should be exposed to an old legend (found in a book belonging to the village priest) that suggests the young man they know as Michael is the reincarnation of Michael Lathendale. The purpose of this is not only to give the PCs more incentive to rescue Michael when Eric abducts him but also to give the adventure's conclusion a bit of irony when the PCs discover that he is really an infamous villain.

Worg Attack

If the PCs decide to investigate the trouble in Stillwater, read or paraphrase the following:

> The crisp evening air frosts your breath, and snow crunches beneath your feet as you travel the old forest road. Above you, icicles hang from the branches of the surrounding fir trees, and clouds begin to darken the afternoon sky.
>
> You round a bend in the road and see an old woodcutter's wagon laden with logs near the root-tangled base of a gigantic tree. The wagon's wheels are buried in the snow, and the old nag harnessed to it is bony and tired. An old man in a ratty brown cloak and tattered hat with a drooping feather mumbles to himself as he examines the horse's front hooves.

This is Old Man Halland, Stillwater's woodcutter. His horse has a stone caught in one of its hooves. If the PCs offer to comfort the animal and remove the stone (something he has trouble doing because his eyes are milky-white with cataracts), he thanks them profusely. He'll even offer them some of the wine he keeps in a gourd beneath the wagon's bench. While the PCs help him, Halland talks about how few travelers come through these parts, and how lucky he is that the PCs found him. He then insists upon taking the PCs with him back to Stillwater, which he says is only a mile or two down the road (when in fact it is four). Before the PCs have a chance to accept or decline this offer, a pack of worgs converges in the woods around the wagon and attacks.

These worgs are members of a larger pack employed by Eric to find Gethirah. They fight without morale checks until half their number is slain.

Old Man Halland, 0-level human male: AC 10; MV 9; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 9, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 11; SZ M (5'5"); ML 9; AL NG; dagger.

Worgs (10): AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3, hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (7); AL NE; XP 120; *MM*/362.

Meeting Michael

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach Stillwater:

> The trees begin to thin out. You reach the top of a small hill that overlooks a little village. To the left, a river winds through the trees. At the bottom of the slope, between the hill and the village, a small creek joins the river. A crude wooden bridge spans the creek.
>
> Beyond the frozen creek are the snow-covered, thatched roofs of Stillwater. Light flickers from behind shuttered windows. The nearby river is covered with a thin sheet of ice. An old mill sits silent, its waterwheel frozen in the river.

To enter the village, the PCs must cross the old wooden bridge that spans the creek. When they near the village square, they notice a gray-cloaked man stacking firewood against the wall of the church, one of the few stone buildings in town.

The man is Michael. (See the "Key NPCs" sidebar.) As the PCs near the church, he looks up at them, stops what he is doing, and approaches. If Old Man Halland is killed in the encounter with the worgs, Michael weeps at the news. Give the PCs a chance to converse with Michael a bit before continuing with the encounter below.

> Suddenly a cry breaks the frozen air. From the trees behind you, a young boy in a brown hooded cloak bursts out into open, a hunting bow in his hand. "Wolves!" he cries as he dashes across the bridge. "A pack of wolves! They're coming this way!"

Michael grabs a woodcutter's ax leaning against the church and runs to meet the boy. If the PCs run after him, they hear him tell the boy to make sure that the stables and pens are securely locked, and then to get help from the rest of the villagers.

> Within a few moments you can make out the dark shapes of large wolves hidden in the shadows of the trees, watching the village from across the creek. As you watch, one of the largest wolves creeps out of the trees, descends the small slope, and jumps across the creek. Its eyes are locked on the young man whom you've just met. After a moment of staring at him with human intelligence, the wolf raises its head and begins to howl. The rest of the pack, hidden behind the trees, howls in response.

These wolves serve Eric. Their leader, which has signaled the rest of the pack, is actually a werewolf. Hidden in the shadows beneath the trees are three more werewolves, eight worgs, and ten dire wolves.

As soon as the werewolf pack leader confirms Michael's identity and howls this message to the rest of the pack, one of the hidden werewolves immediately departs deeper into the forest, skirts the south side of the village, and heads east

Michael stands his ground against a pack of hungry wolves.

to rendezvous with Eric's wagon. It takes him three days to get there and inform Eric that Gethirah has been found.

The rest of the pack retreats into the woods, waiting to prey upon the villagers when an opportunity presents itself (obviously not when a group of powerful adventurers is so close at hand). During the rest of the PCs' stay in Stillwater, the DM is free to use this wolf pack to terrorize the village; but their leader, the 35-hp werewolf who spotted Gethirah, is not foolish. Any attacks made by this pack of wolves should be cunningly planned.

Werewolves (4): AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3; hp 35, 25, 24, 22; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA surprise, lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/240.

Worgs (8): AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3, hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (7); AL NE; XP 120; *MM*/362.

Dire wolves (10): AC 6; MV 18; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ L; ML 10; INT semi (3); AL NE; XP 175; *MM*/362.

Meeting the Villagers

The next logical step for the PCs is to find lodging for the night. The Three Feathers is the only boarding house in the village. Matt Brandy, the innkeeper, shows the PCs to their rooms and has his stableboy tend to their steeds; then he kindly asks them to attend the village meeting at the church in one hour. By this time, a rumor that the PCs have volunteered to protect the village has already started circulating around Stillwater. The villagers don't know about Old Man Halland's notice. Furthermore, they do not have sufficient funds to pay the PCs 100 gp a week. They could probably muster 10 gp a week, but the villagers are hoping that the PCs will protect them out of the kindness of their hearts. If the PCs avoid the meeting, the villagers send Michael to persuade them to attend.

Read or paraphrase the following if the PCs agree to meet with the villagers:

> As you enter the high-vaulted chamber of the church, you're greeted by the villagers' warm cheers and smiling faces. Most of the church's wooden benches are pushed back against the rough stone walls. Three lanterns hang from the wooden crossbeams high above your heads, casting shadows about the dimly lit hall.
>
> At the far end of the chamber, two elderly men stand on a raised wooden platform. One of them is dressed in the dark red robes of the Phoenix, the god of renewal. His gray hair is short, and his face is clean shaven. The other has a long white beard and wears a faded brown robe with an equally faded gray cloak. He leans against a tall, gnarled staff.

These two men are Joseph, the village's priest, and William, the village elder. They make all decisions regarding the welfare of the village and its people. Although the villagers greet the PCs warmly, with pats on the back and kind remarks, Joseph and William are not so friendly. The PCs must prove their trustworthiness before these two men warm up to them.

In the course of the evening, the villagers discuss what should be done about the large number of wolves that have come down out of the mountains. It is a noisy affair, with everybody trying to speak at once. Eventually, the villagers ask the PCs to protect the village. In payment for this, Matt Brandy offers them free food and lodging for their entire stay. To further encourage the PCs, the DM might have some of the villagers give them presents. If the PCs do not agree to help the villagers, perhaps the encounter below changes their minds.

Joseph, human male C4: AC 10; MV 12; hp 15; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15; SZ M (5'8"); AL LG; holy symbol of the Phoenix.

Spells (5/3): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×3), *invisibility to animals, protection from evil*; 2nd—*aid, augury, enthrall.*

William, 0-level human male: AC 10; MV 9; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 15; SZ M (5'6"); AL LN; staff.

The Hambid Massacre

The following text assumes that the PCs spend the night at The Three Feathers boarding house. The DM should amend the description if the PCs choose to reside elsewhere:

> Sometime during the night, the distant howl of a wolf pulls you awake from an uncomfortable sleep. The full moon is framed in the snow-frosted window sills, casting its pale light into your rooms. The wolf howls again, this time closer. Seconds later the shrill cry of a woman pierces the cool night air.

Having completed their mission for Eric, the werewolves have decided to have a little fun in Stillwater. A lycanthrope has just massacred the Hambid family and is now retreating back into the woods.

By the time the PCs arrive at the site, the only thing left is the savaged corpse of John Hambid, nailed with some iron spikes to the inner wall of his barn. Hambid's animals (two cows and an old horse) have also been killed. A man's barefoot prints lead from the open barn door to the door of the Hambid cottage, which is also open. Though John's wife Michele and daughter Elise are nowhere to be found, there is a large pool of blood in the cottage, as well as a trail of blood leading from this pool, out the front door, and into the woods to the south.

It starts to snow shortly after the PCs begin to investigate the murder site. The snow is too light to cover the werewolf's tracks but heavy enough to make the night hazy and uncomfortable. Soon, Joseph, William, Michael, and a group of villagers arrive armed with pitchforks, axes, hoes, and other farming tools. If the PCs have not agreed to protect the village yet, Joseph humbly asks them to reconsider. Regardless of what the PCs do, William organizes a night watch to patrol the village, as well as a search party to find the missing women. Michael joins the search party.

If the PCs examine the trail of blood, they find bare footprints in the snow, as well as drag marks caused by two human-sized objects. The werewolf was in fact dragging both Hambid's wife and daughter when Michele managed to remove her gag and cry out (thus awakening the PCs). About 30 yards from the door of the Hambid home, the footprints gradually begin to resemble those of a wolf. About 200 yards into the forest, the PCs find two mutilated bodies. Other tracks in the snow suggest that a large pack of wolves was recently in this area and has since moved south. If the PCs make a thorough search, they find a single pair of tracks leading eastward through the snow, made earlier by the werewolf who left to meet Eric's wagon (see the "Meeting Michael" encounter).

The PCs may want to follow the tracks—either the lone tracks leading eastward or the tracks of the entire pack, which lead south. The werewolf who is on his way to meet Eric has been traveling since dusk and is already a good six hours ahead of the party. If the PCs decide to follow his footprints, his tracks eventually disappear beneath the falling snow. If the PCs decide to follow the pack, Michael (armed with an ax) asks to accompany them. This is a good chance to let the PCs get to know him. Whether they catch the pack is up to the DM, but under no circumstances do the wolves attack Michael.

A Few Days in Stillwater

After the Hambid attack, the wolf pack retreats back into the mountains, leaving Stillwater in peace, for the present. The Hambid family is buried in the village graveyard, a small clump of land lying to the east of the village. The rest of the villagers attempt to get on with their lives. Although things are calm, William asks the PCs to stay a week longer, just to make sure things are safe. During their stay, the PCs are treated with respect by the villagers. If the PCs insist upon leaving, William promises to tell them where some buried treasure is hidden, as a reward for their trouble (location and amount is up to the DM).

This portion of the adventure presents ideal opportunities for roleplaying and gathering information. Below are some situations that arise between the PCs and Michael during this four-day interval:

☛ **The PCs learn that Michael has lost his memory.** One of villagers tells a PC the story of how Old Man Halland found Michael, naked and unconscious, a little ways east by the side of the river. When Michael awoke, he forgot his identity and still can't remember who he is. The PC also learns that the villagers named Michael after the famous paladin of the same name.

☛ **Michael gives the PCs a gift.** Michael approaches the PCs and presents them with a set of wood carvings that he has made to thank them for helping the village. Each carving is about 1' tall and finely crafted. After a moment, the PCs realize that each figure represents a member of their adventuring party. These figures are extremely important and come into play later in the adventure. They are, essentially, the key to saving Michael from returning to his evil self.

☛ **Michael learns how to use a sword.** Michael humbly asks one of the PCs to teach him how to wield a sword. He admits that although he can't remember ever holding a sword in the past, he would like to learn how to use one so that he might better defend the village. When the PC and Michael begin to spar, Michael seems clumsy and amateurish. As they continue, Michael improves quickly. (He is after all, a 10th-level warrior). Smart PCs should come to the conclusion that, although Michael can't remember who he is, he has obviously had military training.

An Ancient Legend

On their fourth day in Stillwater, the PCs are invited to Joseph's private library in the church. When they arrive, the priest shows them an ancient book called *Stories of the Old World*. One of the pages bears a print of a woodcut depicting a young armored man with long hair and a sad face. He kneels next to a slain man

in black armor, whose head is concealed by a dragon-shaped helmet. Blood is seeping from a wound in the first young man's chest. The entire print is surrounded by an ornate border. At the bottom of the page is written *Fates Entwined: The Deaths of Gethirah and Saint Michael.* Joseph tells the PCs that he suspects Michael is the reincarnation of Michael Lathendale.

Since the PCs may not know the story of Gethirah and Michael, Joseph explains everything he knows about the legend. The book states that a man called *Gethirah Kugothan, who led an army* known as the Legion of Faith, conducted witch trials and burned many innocent people at the stake. Michael Lathendale, a paladin of the Martyr, led the army that destroyed the Legion of Faith. Michael and Gethirah dueled fiercely, and both perished. The book goes on to say that a wizard named Luther Meiron, who was involved with Gethirah's army, was later convicted for treason and publicly executed. It also mentions that many worshipers of the Martyr believe that Michael will be reborn, bringing peace to the kingdom.

Although Michael Lathendale and Gethirah Kugothan were both attractive young men, they did not look exactly alike. The book's print of Michael Lathendale is a simple illustration that could represent any number of young men who fit the same description as both Michael and Gethirah—tall and handsome with long blond hair. Regardless of the print's quality, Joseph can barely contain his excitement.

If the PCs ask Joseph why he thinks Michael is related to the ancient hero, the priest tells them about Michael's scars. (See Gethirah's description in the "Key NPCs" sidebar.) Joseph noticed the scars when Old Man Halland first brought Michael to his church.

Eric Arrives

On the afternoon of the PCs' fifth day in Stillwater, Eric Ulmade arrives. He is disguised as a wealthy, eccentric entertainer who roams from village to village in a gypsy wagon (which is essentially how he conducted himself 500 years ago, before he became a lich). Eric has surreptitiously skirted the south side of the village to make it seem that he has approached from the west instead of the east. Read or paraphrase the following description when Eric finally arrives:

> The creaking sound of wagon wheels and the clop, clop, clop of horses' hooves drifts from the western trees. A moment later, a wagon comes into view, drawn by four white horses. It crosses the wooden bridge and rolls into the village toward the town square. Its driver is wearing a brown cloak with a hood that hides his face. The wagon is a flamboyant thing with a shingled, triangular roof and colorful stained-glass windows.

The driver of the wagon is Lucius, Eric's assistant. (See the "Key NPCs" sidebar.) Both Eric and Lucius are wearing magical amulets that protect them from detection spells. *Know alignment* or *detect evil* spells are of no use to the PCs. The amulets also confound a paladin's ability to detect evil intent, although paladin PCs still sense something peculiar about them.

The wagon rolls to a stop in the town square, and its driver quickly dismounts and hurries to the wagon's side. He unlatches a large window that folds open to reveal a small puppet stage with wooden trim and a red curtain. The cloaked driver then hurries to the back of the wagon and disappears behind a door. Moments later, the red curtain in the little stage slides open and the puppet show begins.

The first act displays a puppet dressed in black plate mail armor with an ornate dragon helmet, kneeling in a pillared hall before a statue of a young man. The statue tells the armored puppet the following:

Go forth with Legion child,
And march on holy ground.
Be my hand that falls,
And tear high cities down.
Gather men before you.
Proudly bear your crest.
Embrace the weak survivors,
And torture all the rest.

As the statue speaks, skeletal puppets rise into view. The background (which is painted on canvas and wrapped around rollers) changes to a scene of a city on fire. More puppets in armor appear and join the skeletons in combat. Somewhere in the background can be heard the whinnies of horses and the cries of men.

While the puppets fight, skeletons slaughtering men-at-arms, the background rolls by and changes into a forest setting. The black-armored puppet leads his army on a march. (The painted scenery passing by on its rollers gives the effect of the puppets marching). During this time, the audience can hear the dark melody of a flute mixed with drums *coming from behind the backdrop. Any* PC bards know that a puppet show of this quality requires many people, or considerable magic, to run it.

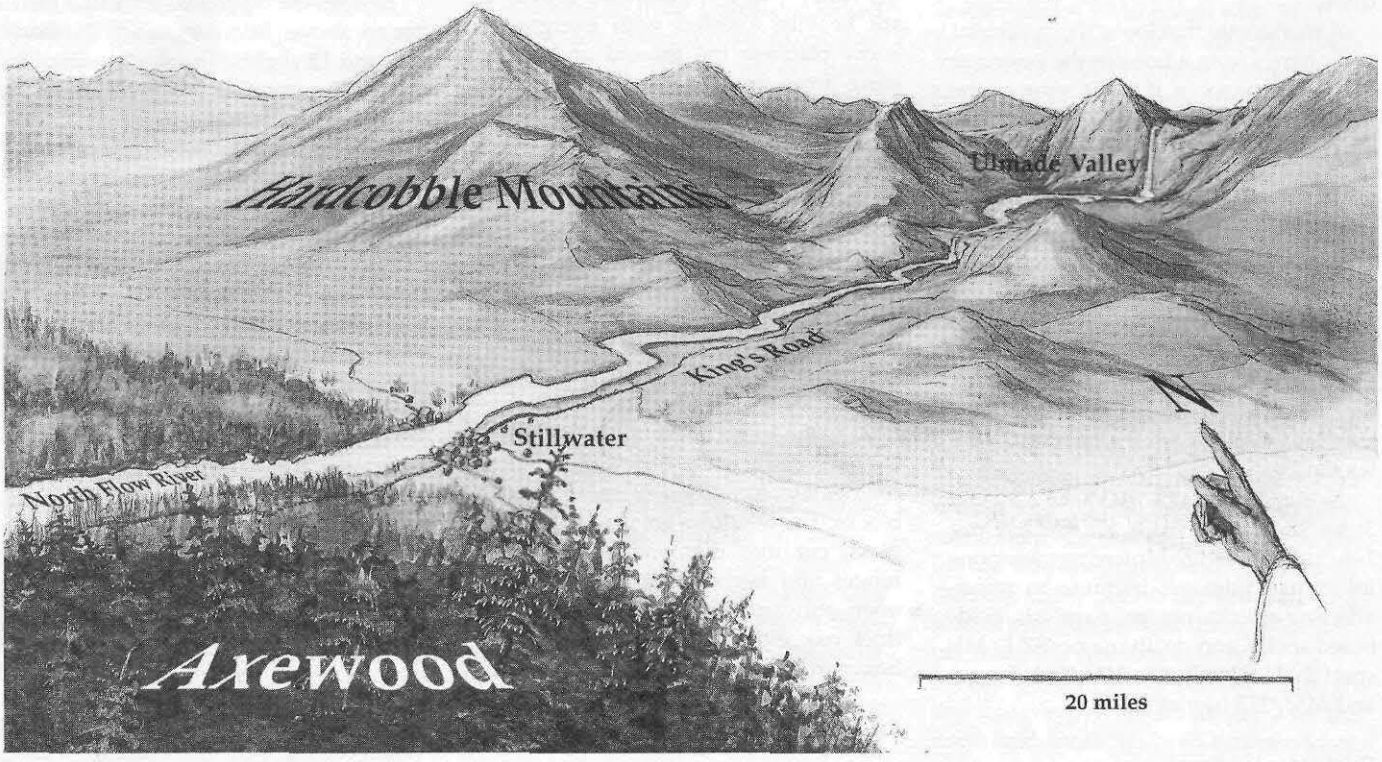
After a moment, a puppet with silver plate armor and long blond hair leads an army of similarly dressed puppets onto the stage and the battle continues. Toward the conclusion of the show, after all the other puppets have killed each other, the puppet in the silver plate armor and the puppet in the black plate armor duel, and to the sound of drums, they impale each other on their long swords. The curtain goes down, the door in the back of the wagon opens, and Eric bows and greets the villagers:

> "Good villagers, how do you fare? I am Eric of the Path, traveler, bard, and puppeteer. What you just saw was only a sample of my art. I travel from village to village, bearing news and telling tales. If you would be kind enough to welcome me for awhile, I'd be willing to share with you songs and plays unlike any you have ever heard or seen before."

The villagers applaud and welcome him to stay. While Eric is in the village, he uses his *seeming* and *polymorph self* spells to hide his undead nature. He remains on his best behavior, sharing songs and stories with anyone who asks. He also strikes up a friendship with Michael, who bears no malice toward the curious puppeteer.

Though it is within the lich's power to capture Michael and destroy the entire village without a masquerade, he avoids displaying his true identity for three reasons: He is at this point unsure of

Wilderness Map



Michael's mental stability, he has observed the PCs' presence yet does not know how powerful they are, and he enjoys pretending to be alive.

If the PCs examine the wagon, they find the Ulmade crest (a gold dragon on a green and red kite shield) embossed on the horses' harnesses. If the PCs ask Joseph about this, the old priest tells them that the crest belonged to a baron who once lived in a valley in the Hardcobble Mountains. After consulting his books, Joseph informs the PCs that the baron's name was Matthew Ulmade, and that he lived about 500 years ago. The valley itself was once the gateway to an important mountain pass, but the pass was destroyed by an avalanche many years ago. Because the pass has been blocked, the valley is rarely visited these days. If the PCs ask Eric about the crest, he denies any knowledge of Baron Ulmade and claims that he purchased the wagon many years ago from a city to the west (he can't remember which one).

If the PCs ask Eric what he's doing in such a remote area, he tells them that he is planning to ford the river on his way north to meet an old friend. That night, Eric coaxes Michael into his wagon, and the two of them *teleport* back to Castle Ulmade via Eric's *magic mirrors* (see below). By morning, Lucius sets off with the wagon, traveling west as a decoy. He travels the King's Road for three days or until the PCs catch up with him, whichever comes first. If the PCs encounter Lucius, he fights ferociously and only abandons the wagon and retreats into the forest (in wolf form) as a last resort. Otherwise, he doubles back through the forest and returns to Ulmade Valley with the wagon. With Michael gone, the villagers are extremely upset. Joseph begs the PCs to go after him.

Eric's Wagon

This wagon is of sturdy wooden design. It has a peaked shingled roof, stained-glass windows, and an iron stove and chimney. Although it appears to be nothing more than a humble gypsy wagon, it is actually magical. The wheels have been enchanted so that they can travel over any kind of rough terrain without becoming stuck or broken. Presently, the wagon is drawn by four undead horses with *permanent illusions* cast upon them to make them appear as white stallions. The wagon's door is usually locked, and only Eric has the key.

If the PCs enter the wagon, they find the interior crowded with an amazing number of puppets and marionettes. They sit on shelves or hang by their strings from hooks in the ceiling. Wizards, goblins, knights, and jesters are just some of the figures stored in this room. All of them seem to silently watch the PCs. A network of pulleys and wires controls the red curtain in front of the stage, and a partition behind the stage is complete with pulleys and rollers to allow the painted canvas backdrops to roll by.

Against the wall next to the wagon door is a tall, standing mirror. This is one

of Eric's *magic mirrors* (see below). Its counterpart is located in area **30** of Castle Ulmade. The PCs are unable to use them unless they find the key mentioned below.

A marionette that looks like a skeletal jester hangs from a hook in the ceiling at the end of the room. If the PCs tug on the marionette, a secret compartment opens. The compartment contains some books of old sheet music and a gilded lyre of excellent quality worth 700 gp. There is also a small wooden box containing one of the keys to Eric's *magic mirrors* (see the description below).

Sometimes jermlaine from the castle manage to follow Eric when he steps through the *magic mirrors*. This affords them an inexhaustible source of fun, for they love to play with the puppets in the wagon.

Skeletal horses (4): AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1–6/1–6; SD edged/piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to mind-affecting attacks, poison, paralysis, cold-based spells, and death magic; SZ L; ML special; AL N; XP 175; *MM*/194 (horse) and *MM*/315 (skeleton).

Eric's *Magic Mirrors*

These twin stand-up mirrors are teleportation portals. Both are 6 feet tall, 3 feet wide, and framed in ornately carved wood. The likeness of a bearded man's face, mouth open, is carved into the base of each frame. Within the mouths of the carvings are keyholes. Eric has two copies of a special key that he uses to lock and unlock these magical portals. Eric keeps the portals locked at all times. While locked, the glass in the *mirrors* is opaque. When unlocked, the glass becomes misty and insubstantial, allowing passage through the portals. The locks cannot be picked. If one *mirror* is unlocked, the other *mirror* becomes unlocked also. Likewise, when one is locked, so is the other.

One of the *magic mirrors* is kept in Eric's wagon; the other is located in area **30** of Ulmade Castle. Eric uses the *mirrors* to transport safely to the castle once Michael is in his custody. Each *mirror* is treated as AC 8 and can withstand 15 points of damage.

The Valley and the Castle

Ulmade Valley is accessible via a seldom-traveled section of the King's Road. Both the valley and the mountains around it are heavily forested with evergreens. Snow blankets the ground and icicles hang from tree branches. Cascading down gigantic terraced cliffs, on the valley's eastern side, is a waterfall called The Old Warden. This waterfall empties into a crescent-shaped lake that the locals call Red Leaf Lake. Each of the cliff terraces in the waterfall is between 50 and 150 feet tall.

Castle Ulmade stands at the top of the rocky edge of the terraced waterfall. An old flagstone road leads from the castle into the valley, along a sheer cliff overlooking the lake. Unless otherwise noted, the main castle walls, floors, and vaulted ceilings are composed of smooth stone blocks. The windows are made of leaded glass, cut into diamond shapes, with hinges and latches that allow them to open outward. The doors are made of thick oak, either arched or square, with heavy iron hinges.

Eric's Servants

The castle, virtually abandoned except for Eric's presence, has become a haven for roughly 100 jermlaine. They have made tunnels that twist through the stone walls, as well as highways along old ivy vines that creep beneath the castle bridges and around the castle's windows. While scavenging throughout the castle, these gremlins found Eric and witnessed him practicing his magic. They now serve the lich, whom they worship as a god.

At any time (DM's discretion), these little creatures might taunt, trap, or attack the PCs. They can appear from beneath loose tiles in the floors, from vines outside windows, inside fireplaces or old suits of decorative armor, and so forth. Unless ordered by Eric, the jermlaine do not enter the castle cellar for fear of the undead that lurk there.

Jermlaine (100): AC 7; MV 15; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2 (tiny dart) or 1–4 (miniature pike); SA 2% cumulative chance of knocking lightly armored victims unconscious per round; SD treated as 4 HD monsters for the purpose of saving throws and magical attacks; SZ T (1'+); ML 12; INT average (10); AL NE; XP 15; *MM*/176.

Besides the colony of jermlaine mentioned above, Eric commands 20 shadows and 12 wights. The shadows hide in the dark corners of the castle, and the wights are kept locked in the cellar. Eric makes use of these servants only after sundown. These undead minions are not particularly bright, but their numbers make them a considerable threat.

Shadows (20): AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 18 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SA Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/312.

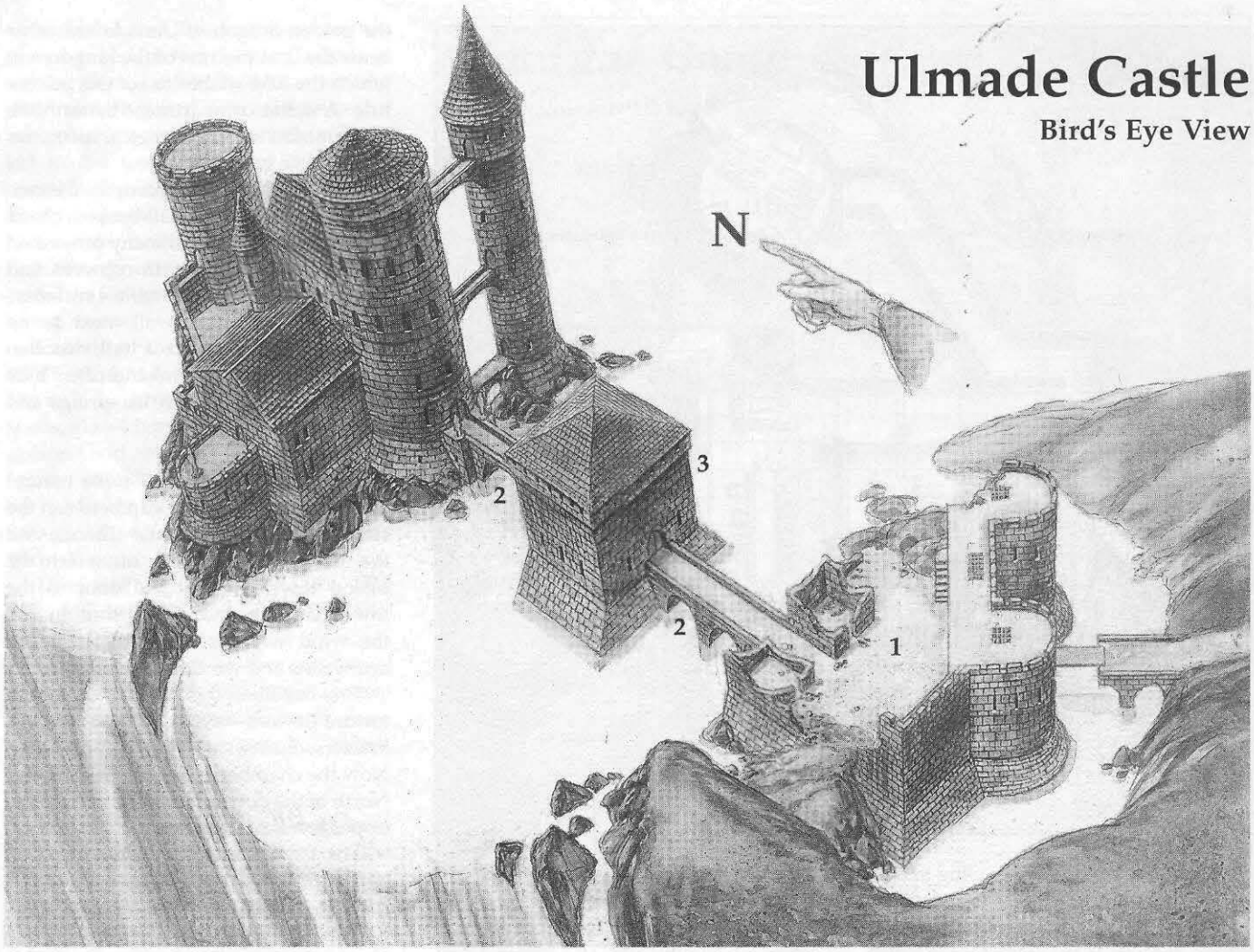
Wights (12): INT average (8); AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 4+3; hp 19 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA energy drain; SD silver or +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, poison, paralysis, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 14; XP 1,400; *MM*/360.

The Lich's Tactics

Wherever the PCs first enter the castle, Eric confronts them using a *dimension door* spell to deliver the following message. He appears to the PCs still disguised in his human form:

> "I know why you have come. You believe that Michael is the reincarnation of Michael Lathendale, the paladin who slew Gethirah Kugothan nearly 500 years ago. You've come here to rescue him from me, but I assure you that I pose no threat to him. In fact, there is no one in this world more important to me. You see, Michael isn't the famous paladin who slew Gethirah Kugothan so many years ago. He *is* Gethirah Kugothan. I've merely brought him home."

After delivering the above message, Eric attacks the PCs with a *chain lightning* spell and then retreats through the *dimension door* to area **29**. From area **29**, Eric watches the PCs through his *crystal ball*. While the PCs search the castle for Michael, Eric does his best to destroy



them using his magic and his minions. During the day, he equips troops of jermlaine with glass vials containing poison gas. These gremlins appear from beneath loose tiles in the floor or loose stones in the walls and break these vials at the PCs' feet. PCs within a 10' radius of this gas must make a saving throw vs. poison or choke and wheeze for 1–6 rounds, suffering 4d6 points of damage (half if the saving throw is successful). If the PCs are near area **13**, Eric animates the giant skeleton there and uses it to attack them. Eric also has the gargoyles in area **27** at his disposal. Though they have no great love for the lich, they fear him enough to do his bidding.

At night, Eric commands his shadows and wights to attack the PCs en masse. The undead creatures delight in stalking prey through the castle.

If the PCs get close to Eric's hiding place in area **29**, he casts *improved invisibility* on himself and bombards the PCs with spells like *meteor storm, incendiary cloud, lightning bolt, delayed blast fire ball, finger of death, death fog,* and *polymorph other*. If Eric ever feels threatened, he retreats using a *teleport, phase door,* or *wraithform* spell. Should Eric be forced to retreat from the PCs, he does his best to retrieve his three spellbooks from area **29**. He then retreats to area **34** of the castle's lower level, where he continues to watch the PCs with his *crystal ball*.

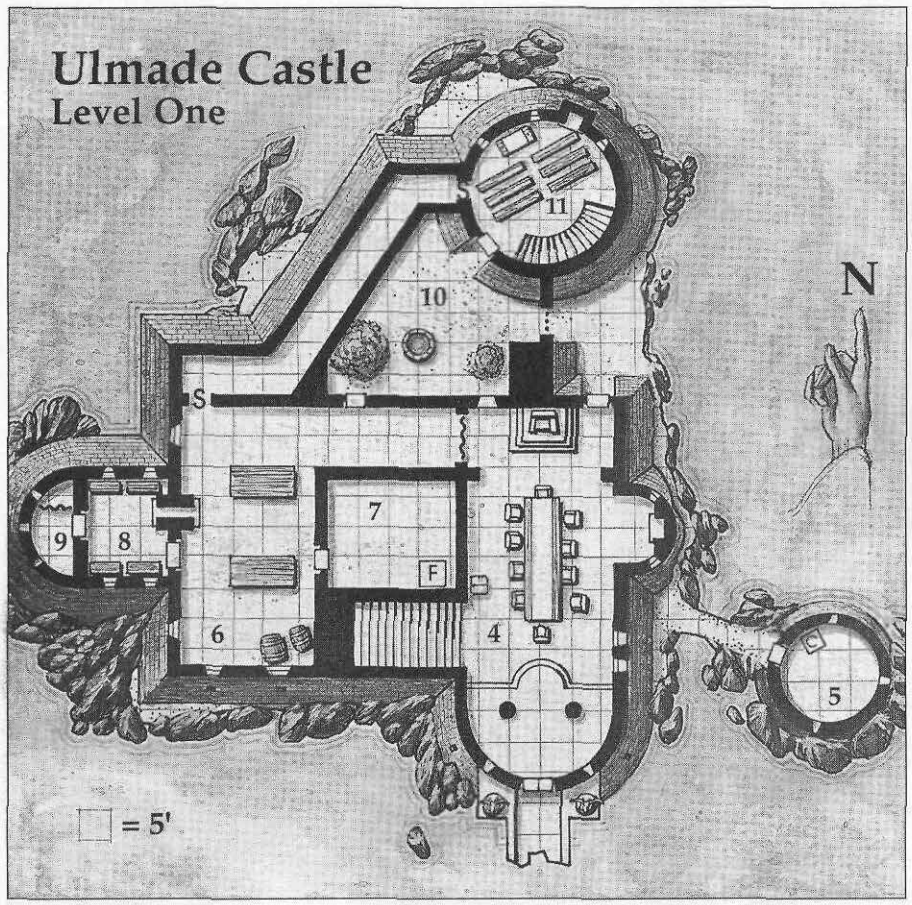
If the PCs make it as far as Gethirah's tomb (area **41**), Eric *teleports* into the tomb to intercept them and attacks them openly. If it becomes apparent that the PCs are going to defeat Eric, he retreats to fight another day, taking his *crystal ball* and spellbooks with him.

Level One

1. The Old Keep. This area once housed Baron Ulmade's men-at-arms. This area also holds the remains of the stables. A crumbled, ivy-covered wall encloses a weed-choked courtyard. At its highest point, this wall is about 20 feet tall; however, sections of it have collapsed into moss-covered piles of rubble that can easily be traversed. The keep's hollow, crumbling towers have become nesting places for crows.

A 10'-wide, 15'-deep moat surrounds the keep to the south, west, and east. An old drawbridge spans the moat on the keep's southeast side. Presently, snow covers everything.

2. Castle Bridges. These 10'-wide bridges are made of mortared stone, complete



with battlements. Old vines cling to their arched undersides. If the PCs are quiet, they might hear the gremlins' squeaky voices coming from within these vines, for the jermlaine use them to travel to and from the castle. The jermlaine fear the gargoyles in area **27** and would rather travel unseen.

3. Guard Tower. This tower has been constructed on, and is partially carved from, an island of rock that juts up from the riverbed. A triangular shingled roof covers its peak. Rusted portcullises sit closed in the tower's north and south walls. All of the upper wooden floors of the tower have long since collapsed between the two portcullises. Bats hang from the rafters. Movement through the debris is reduced by half.

4. Great Hall. Standing at the castle's main entrance is a set of ornately crafted arched double doors with two bronze door knockers shaped like dragon heads. Flanking both sides of the door are two 5'-tall marble statues of dragons with wings outstretched. The doors themselves are slightly ajar.

Beyond the doors, on either side, are two spiral pillars. Just north of these pillars, two wide steps descend into the Great Hall. The floor of this arched chamber is made of white and blue diamond-shaped tiles, now chipped and broken. Old torch sconces line the stone walls, and cobwebs hang from two sets of candle chandeliers. Light filters through leaded glass windows positioned 10 feet above the chamber's floor. A circular alcove in the east wall contains a large fireplace, now filled with dark cinders and cobwebs. Hanging above the mantel is a ceremonial longsword encrusted with gems, worth 600 gp.

Against the north wall, on a raised dais, sits a impressive throne carved from mahogany, ornately engraved. Hanging on the walls on either side of the throne are two kite shields. One bears the golden dragon of Ulmade; the other bears the coat-of-arms of the kingdom in which the DM wishes to set this adventure. A secret compartment beneath the seat contains a pair of magical spectacles that act as a *gem of seeing*.

A 20'-long oak table occupies the center of this chamber. Tall-backed chairs surround the table, and many unwashed dinner dishes along with cobwebs and scurrying rats cover the table's surface.

Against the west wall, next to an ascending staircase, is a tall, wooden grandfather clock. Jermlaine often hide within it and play with its springs and gears.

5. Torture Chamber. A 5'-wide natural causeway traverses the gap between the stone foundation of Castle Ulmade and the small island of rock on which the prison tower stands. The door to the tower has long since rusted shut. Inside, the wind whistles eerily through thin arrow slits and windows.

Eric has filled this room with ancient torture devices—a rack, an iron maiden, braziers, chains, saws, pokers, and cages. Now the chamber is filled with cobwebs. North of the door, a ladder ascends to the upper levels of the tower.

For a short time, Eric had a group of apprentices studying under him. His most prized student was named Egan. Egan made the mistake of looking into one of Eric's spellbooks uninvited. Eric ordered his other apprentices to torture Egan to death in this chamber. Egan's poltergeist still haunts this area, and the jermlaine avoid this place. If the PCs enter the room, the poltergeist attacks immediately.

Poltergeist (1): AC 10; MV 6; HD ½; hp 1; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA fear; SD *invisibility*, silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 10; INT low (7); AL LE; XP 120; *MM*/296.

6. Kitchen. This long chamber is dominated by two large wooden tables. The walls are cluttered with shelves of pots, pans, and bowls. Light filters through dusty leaded windows, and cobwebs hang everywhere. A soot-blackened fireplace dominates the west wall. A secret door disguised as a set of shelves along the north wall swings open on squeaky

hinges, leading into a hidden tunnel that travels the length of the castle wall. Two large ale barrels lay on their sides against the south wall.

While the PCs are in this room, giant spiders from area **8** scurry out of the fireplace and attack. These giant spiders are by no means friendly with the castle's jermlaine population. In fact, the gremlins are a staple in the giant spiders' diet.

Giant spiders (6): AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 3+3; hp 19 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SA poison (Type F; immediate death if victim fails a saving throw); SZ L (8' diameter); ML 13; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/326.

7. Storage. This dark chamber is empty except for a few cobweb-covered shelves and a trapdoor in the southeast corner. The trapdoor is locked with a rusted padlock and opens to a wooden ladder leading to the wine cellar below (area **31**). It has been *wizard locked* by Eric, who can unlock the trap door magically from anywhere in the castle.

8. Servants' Quarters. This dimly lit chamber is draped with fresh spider webs, from which dangle the dried husks of dead jermlaine and rats. If a PC becomes stuck in these webs, it requires one round for every Strength point below 19 to break free.

Dusty leaded windows are in both the north and south walls. Beds with rotting straw-stuffed mattresses rest against the north and south walls, and a fireplace is in the east wall.

A nest of six giant spiders lives in this chamber. See area **6** for statistics.

9. Privy and Bathing Room. This area served as a bathroom for the servants. An old wooden basin sits against the south wall, and a curtained alcove in the northern section of the room contains a privy. The wind blowing through one of the broken windows sounds oddly like a woman crying.

10. Garden. At the moment, this area is covered with snow. In the center of the garden is a stone fountain designed to look like a maiden pouring water from an urn. Partially hidden by the snow is a cobblestone path. It winds its way from the gate to the fountain, and then to both the chapel door to the north and a door hidden by vines, weeds, and ivy to the south.

The wall surrounding the garden is 20 feet tall, complete with a walkway and battlements. An oak tree partially covers the west wall. A smaller sapling stands in front of the window to area **4** and a window at ground level (not shown on the map) that looks into area **32**. This window is hidden from view behind a tangle of bushes.

If the smaller sapling is examined closely, a woman's face can be seen in the bark. Eric has imprisoned a young dryad beneath this tree with a version of the 9th-level wizard spell *imprisonment*. On those rare occasions when he plays his harp in the garden, he releases her and forces her to sing for him. The dryad's name is Maeve. The PCs can free her by casting *freedom* (the reverse of *imprisonment*) from the scroll found in area **19**. Characters who free Maeve should receive a story award of 2,500 XP.

If the PCs free her, Maeve does her best to help them; however, in 6d6 hours she begins to weaken and die unless she uses her *dimension door* ability to return to her home tree several miles south of Ulmade Castle.

Maeve (dryad): AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA *charm*; SD *dimension door*; SZ M; ML 12; INT high (13); AL N; XP 975; *MM*/93.

11. Chapel. The door to this small chapel is rusted shut and overgrown with weeds and ivy. A combined Strength of 40 is needed to force open the door. Read the following when the PCs first enter:

> Colorful light filters through narrow stained-glass windows positioned 15 feet high in the chamber's walls. Dust particles float in the beams of light. Wooden benches are arranged about this circular room, and a fireplace is embedded in the northeast wall. A stone spiral staircase ascends into darkness. Along the north wall, a partially cracked statue lies on the floor near its dais. The alabaster statue is 6 feet tall and resembles a handsome young man wearing a loincloth, his bound hands raised above his head.

Hidden on a shelf inside the fireplace is a 5'-long, narrow box of carved mahogany. Set upon the box is a magical trap that can be negated only by a *dispel magic* (cast against 18th level), and then only for 1d4 rounds. The magical trap is also nullified by an *anti-magic shell* for as long as the *shell* persists. Any non-good creature that touches the box bursts into flames for 4d12 points of damage (no saving throw).

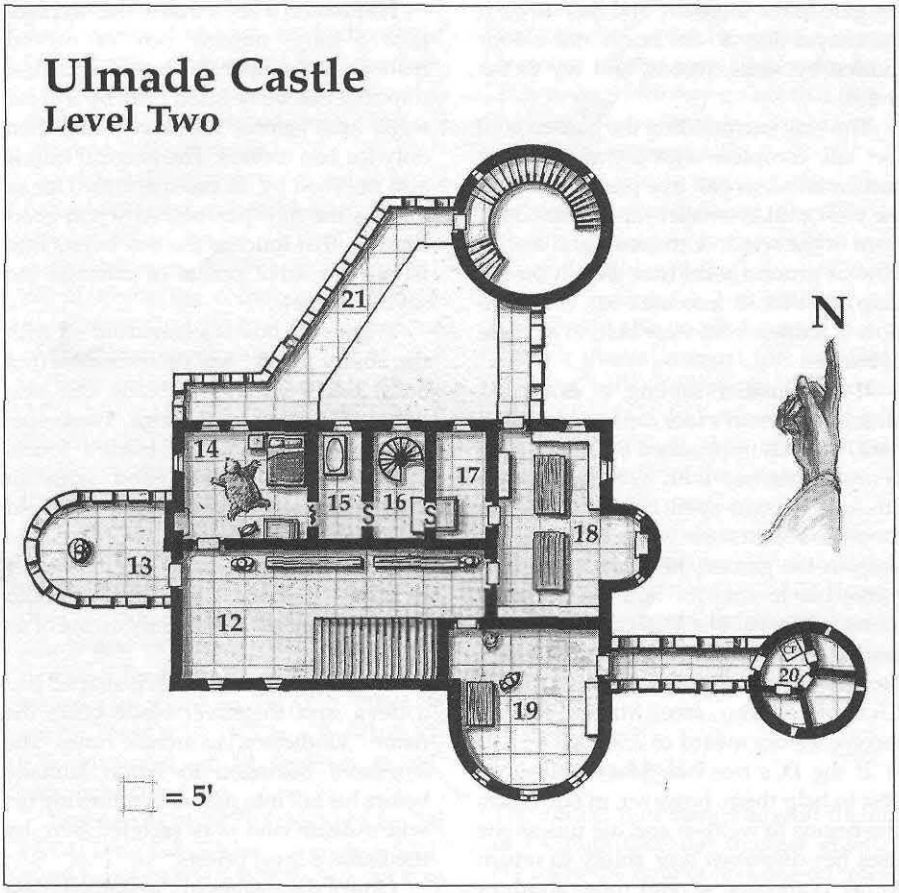
Within the box is a *longsword +3* with the ability to cast *heal* or *restoration* (not both) once/week. The blade can also *detect evil* within a 60' range. These special powers require the blade's touch. The sword is lawful good with an Intelligence of 13 and an Ego of 9. If held by an evil character, the sword tries to exert its influence, compelling its wielder to release it. Good characters who hold the sword are made instantly aware of its special powers.

The sword's golden hilt is shaped like a deva, and the silver blade bears the name "Vindicator" in archaic runes. The *longsword* belonged to Baron Ulmade before his fall into madness following his wife's death and was secreted here by the Baron's loyal priests.

One of the images in the stained-glass windows is a young lady holding a bunch of flowers. This is actually a glass golem that Eric placed here to guard the *longsword*, an item which he fears greatly and is unwilling to approach himself. The golem animates and attacks after the PCs enter the chamber.

The staircase that spirals to the chapel's ceiling ends at a trap door that opens onto the tower's rooftop. The staircase also has two landings: at the first landing is a door that opens onto a walkway along the garden wall (area **21**); at the second landing is a door that opens onto the bridge (area **22**). A secret door in the west wall of the chapel opens into a tunnel in the garden wall that leads to area **6.** It opens when a loose stone in the wall is pushed.

Glass golem: AC 4; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2–24; SA *prismatic spray*; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; regenerate 1 hp/round in direct sunlight; SW blunt weapons inflict double damage; SZ M; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 5,000; *MM*/169.



Level Two

12. Hall. Tall, leaded glass windows in the southern wall allow light to filter in. A stone staircase with a wooden railing leads down to area **4**. Two dark wooden benches rest against the north wall; both are flanked by cobweb-covered suits of full platemail. The floor of the hall is covered by a tan-colored carpet with a black dragon pattern on it.

13. Porch. This large, open porch is surrounded by battlements. The area affords a breathtaking view of the waterfall and the valley below.

At the western end of the porch stands a 15'-tall, brown clay statue of Baron Matthew Ulmade in full platemail. Encased within the clay is a giant skeleton enchanted by Eric. Eric does not activate this monstrosity unless he thinks that he can surprise the PCs with it. He may wait until the PCs re-enter the castle before he sends the giant skeleton after them. When the skeleton is activated, most of the clay covering it cracks and crumbles away.

Giant skeleton: AC 4; MV 12; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–12; SA hurl *fireball* once every 6 hours (8d6 points of damage; save vs. spell for half damage); SD immune to fire; cold-based spells inflict half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold*, and other mind-affecting spells; immune to poison, paralysis, and death magic; edged weapons inflict half damage, piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage, turned as mummy; SZ L (12' tall); ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 1,400; *MM*/316.

14. Bed Chamber. The door to this chamber is locked. This room belonged to Eric when he was mortal. It has leaded glass windows in the west and north walls. A large white bearskin rug covers the center of the floor. A fireplace stands against the western wall, cluttered with cobwebs. An old canopied bed stands in the northeastern corner next to a small, dark, wooden nightstand. A bronze dragon-shaped candle holder, its candle melted, rests on the nightstand next to a book of poetry and a pair of spectacles. The first of the drawers in the nightstand contains a silver, gem-encrusted comb and brush worth 100 gp each and a silver, hand-held mirror worth 50 gp. The second drawer contains an engraved wooden box holding 53 sheets of delicate parchment, four slightly used quills, and seven vials of black ink (now dried). A second, smaller box contains fine-grained sand, used to dry ink.

A large, ornately crafted wardrobe stands against the south wall next to a standing, oval-shaped mirror. This wardrobe is actually one of Eric's many *magical tools*. Hanging within are numerous robes, cloaks, chemises, jerkins, and doublets of various sizes, colors, and fashions. Upon opening the wardrobe's double doors, the PCs feel a chill draft blowing from within. When the hanging clothing is taken out, the only thing visible is the wooden back of the wardrobe. However, if the PCs squeeze in between the clothing, they find themselves somewhere in the fir tree forest on the western side of the valley. The wardrobe effectively *teleports* those who enter it to the forest. However, the *teleport* is one-way only.

15. Bathing Chamber. A colorful tapestry depicting two armies in full plate engaging in battle hangs in the doorway of this small room. A bath and a privy take up the northern portion of the room, next to a tall, arched, leaded glass window. The water in the bath is frozen. The floor and ceiling are made of green and black tiles. The plaster-covered walls have been painted with forest scenes, now flaking and faded. Against the east wall is a set of empty shelves. The secret door that these shelves conceal opens outward on squeaky hinges, exposing the secret chamber (area **16** below).

16. Secret Room. When the castle was first constructed, this chamber was easily accessible from the rest of the keep. Eric later decided to change the room's two entrances into secret doors to deter any intruders from finding his studio and workshop in the levels above. Against

the eastern wall stands a tall wooden bookcase. This bookcase is actually a secret door that opens into area **17**. The bookcase itself contains a large collection of antique story books, fairy tales, and poetry. Another secret door disguised as part of the stone wall opens into area **15**. Both of the secret doors in this room open easily when pushed. A stone staircase spirals upward to the castle's third level. A tall, dusty, leaded window in the north wall at the foot of the stairs allows diffused light to filter in. All the walls here are covered with frescos depicting Castle Ulmade, the waterfall, and the valley below.

Four of Eric's shadows are hiding in the dark recesses of this room. If the PCs have destroyed all of the lich's shadow minions, this room is unoccupied.

Shadows (4): hp 18 each; see "Eric's Servants" section for complete statistics.

17. The Second Magic Wardrobe. A tall, ornately crafted wooden wardrobe, similar to the one in area **14**, stands against the west wall of this small room. Like the first wardrobe, this one is also magical. It works with a third magical wardrobe in area **29**. Eric uses these wardrobes as escape routes should the need arise. If the PCs pass between the cloaks and robes stored in this wardrobe, they are *teleported* to the wardrobe in area **29** and vice versa.

A secret door in the west wall beside the wardrobe opens into area **16** when a loose stone in the wall behind the wardrobe is pushed.

A tall, arched, leaded glass window dominates the room's north wall. Five more of Eric's shadows lurk in the dark corners of this room. They are joined by an *invisible* bone naga created by Eric. The bone naga becomes visible the instant it attacks. If the PCs destroyed all of Eric's shadows in previous encounters, they have only the bone naga to contend with.

Bone naga: AC 6; MV 12; HD 7; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1–4/3–12; SA spells (see below), Strength drain; SD immune to poison, death magic, *charm, hold, sleep,* and cold-based spells; SZ L; ML 20; INT exceptional (15); AL LE; XP 4,000; *Monstrous Compendium® Annual,* Volume One.

Spells (4/2/2): 1st—*magic missile* (×3), *ventriloquism;* 2nd—*invisibility, web;* 3rd—*lightning bolt, Melf's acid arrow.*

Shadows (5): hp 18 each; see "Eric's Servants" section for complete statistics.

18. Minor Library. This room is a mess. Shelves cluttered with moldy scrolls and books line the walls. Two large oak tables dominate the room, also cluttered with sheets of parchment, scrolls, and books. The majority of these pertain to the Ulmade family history, local flora and fauna, as well as geographical characteristics of the surrounding land. A window in the northeastern wall is shattered, and the floor next to it is covered with snow. Many of the books and scrolls around this broken window are severely water damaged.

Paintings of Ulmade family members hang crookedly on the walls. Behind the painting of the Baroness, Elaine Ulmade, is the deed to Ulmade Castle as well as the surrounding lands. The deed is protected with a *preserve* spell and was hidden by Baron Ulmade when his sanity was first beginning to crumble.

19. Eric's Workshop. This chamber is semi-circular. Three dusty windows are positioned high in the south wall. The glass in the center window has been shattered and the edges of the window are blackened, as if something blasted its way from the castle's interior, through the casement, to the outside. A layer of snow and ice cover the sill and floor beneath the broken window. In the east wall, a door with squeaky hinges opens to a bridge that spans the area between this tower and one of the castle's other towers.

A bronze incense burner in the shape of a dragon sits on a stool next to the north door. A table stands against the west wall, covered with tubes, beakers, vials, mortars with pestles, jars, boxes of sand, and loose sheets of parchment depicting mathematical equations. The papers rustle in the chill breeze blowing through the broken window in the south wall. A 6'-tall alabaster statue of a beautiful woman with long hair stands next to the table. Sitting on the floor next to the statue is a *decanter of endless water* with a brass stopper shaped like a nixie.

Shelves against the east wall next to the door contain jars, vials, boxes and bags of spell components. Amid these items is a bone scroll tube with an quasit-shaped plug made of platinum (worth 50 gp). Removing its plug triggers a *fire trap* spell that detonates for 1d4+18 points of damage. Within the scroll tube is a magical scroll with the spells *gate* and *freedom* (the reverse of *imprisonment*). The scroll is not damaged by the *fire trap* spell.

20. Prison Cells. This portion of the tower has been sectioned off into three small, separate cells and an entrance annex. Each cell has a small 2'-tall, 10"-wide barred window, a 2'-square grate-covered sewage drain, and a set of rusty shackles riveted into the stone walls. Each cell door is made of heavy oak with iron trimmings and has a lock in poor condition (+10% to Open Locks rolls). Iron rungs imbedded in the stone wall of the entrance annex allow access to the tower's upper and lower levels.

21. Walkway. A 5'-wide walkway runs along the top of the garden wall, behind the tall stone battlements. Behind a loose stone in the battlements is a 1'-square compartment. Within this compartment is a skeleton-shaped key on a leather thong. This key opens any door within the castle and its surrounding towers. Near the secret compartment is a door that opens onto a landing on the spiral staircase in area **11**.

Level Three

22. Bridge. The door at the north end of this bridge opens onto a landing on the spiral staircase in area **11**. The south door leads to area **23**.

23. Hall. This hall is lit by a window in the southwest wall. An archway in the northwest wall leads to a stone spiral staircase going up and down. Partway up, this spiral staircase is blocked with a magical *wall of stone*, preventing passage between this level and the above floors. Unless the PCs are able to break through the *wall*, they must access the level above either by using the magic wardrobe in area **17** or by scaling the castle's outer walls.

Against the east wall, across from the staircase, stands a set of full platemail. The doorway in the east wall (see area **24** for details) has been bricked up.

The platemail is actually a mechanical device invented by Eric (for his own amusement) to be used by his jermlaine servants. This half-magical, half-technological device requires four jermlaine drivers to operate it. When fully manned, the suit can walk and attack almost as effectively as a real man.

The jermlaine "tank" always attacks last every combat round. Since the tank's four jermlaine drivers are completely enclosed within a metal shell, spells such as *heat metal* inflict an additional 1–4 points of damage to the jermlaine. Once the tank loses all of its hit points, it falls over and the jermlaine within scurry away if they can.

Jermlaine "tank": AC 3; MV 6; HD 5; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 (or by weapon type); SZ M (6' tall); ML Special; INT non (0); AL nil; XP 175; longsword.

Jermlaine (4): hp 2 each; see "Eric's Servants" for complete statistics.

24. Haunted Bedroom. The door to this room has been bricked up. Unless the PCs can tear down the bricks, they might enter the chamber through the secret door in area **28** or scale the castle's outer walls and climb in through a window.

This chamber is particularly dusty. A canopied bed stands against the south wall, and a bearskin rug covers part of the stone floor. A large painting of a sad-looking woman in courtly garb flanks the bed on the east side, and an equally large painting of a man with his face scratched out hangs on the west side. Behind a deep blue curtain in the north wall is a 10'-square room containing a large porcelain bathtub and a privy.

It was here that Elaine Ulmade was seduced by the incubus and gave birth to the man who would later become Gethirah Kugothan. It was also here that she passed away. Her soul still haunts this room. When the PCs enter this room, Elaine's ghost appears as a beautiful woman in courtly attire. Between sobs, she demands to know her husband's whereabouts. If the PCs answer her or ask her questions, she is unresponsive, as if unable to hear them. Her sobs send chills down the PCs' spines. Eventually, she attempts to possess one of the PCs and search for her husband to warn him of the great evil in the castle (referring to the lich, Eric). Of course, since the Baron has been dead for centuries, her search is in vain. If the PCs try to prevent her from searching the castle or oppose her in any way, she attacks them. The jermlaine do not enter this room because they fear the ghost.

If Eric is slain, Elaine's ghost is finally put to rest.

Elaine Ulmade (ghost): AC 0 (or 8); MV 9; HD 10; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg age 10–40 years; SA *magic jar*; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14; INT high (14); AL LE; XP 4,000; *MM*/130.

25. Secret Room. The secret door to this room opens when a latch hidden behind a nearby still-life painting is pulled. A ladder against the north wall leads up to area **28**. Piled against the west wall is the following treasure: a painting of a woman playing a lute, done by the famous artist Gerald Morbius, worth 600 gp; a small, unlocked chest containing 1,000 gp; and a leather purse containing two potions of *extra-healing* and a scroll of *protection against baatezu (devils)*.

26. Forgotten Antiques. This chamber is crammed with old furniture, paintings, pieces of armor, banners, and kite shields. Cobwebs are draped over everything. In the shadows stands a cobweb-covered bronze statue, 6' tall, of a man in ancient armor holding a spear. This is actually Eric's phylactery. If Eric's body is destroyed, his life force retreats into this hollow statue. (See the "Encountering Gethirah" section for details on Eric and his phylactery.)

Level Four

27. Tower Peak. This open area overlooks the garden as well as the entire river. A trapdoor opens to a ladder leading down. Four gargoyles are perched on the battlements, facing north, south, east and west. They appear to be normal statues, but when night falls, they fly from their perches in search of prey. Though these gargoyles have no love for Eric, they fear him and attack the PCs when so commanded. The jermlaine fear these gargoyles and do not approach their perch.

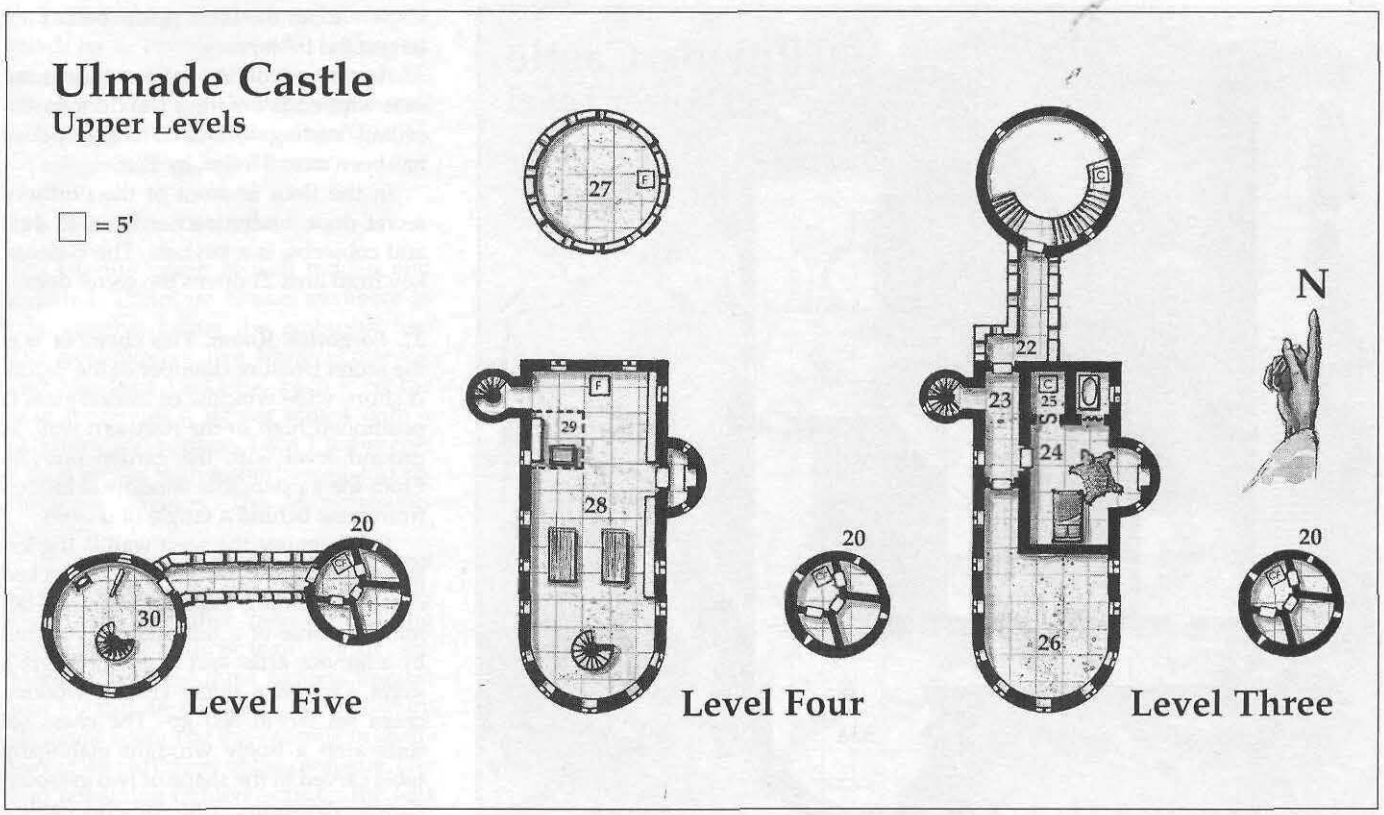
Gargoyles (4): AC 5; MV 9, fly 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–6/1–4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/125.

28. Eric's Studio. This large, vaulted hall has leaded glass windows on all sides. Thick red curtains block out most of the light. Eric uses the northern part of this room to paint and sculpt. In the northeast corner stands an easel on which sits a dark landscape. On a stool next to the easel is a paint box containing brushes, charcoal, and small glass jars of various colored oil paints. On the floor next to the stool are a palette, rolled-up sheets of unstretched canvas, and a sketch book containing dark and macabre sketches. A wooden chest containing eight blocks of moist clay wrapped in waxed paper sits against the wall, behind the easel.

A secret trapdoor disguised as a large chest rests against the middle of the north wall. When opened, the PCs find a ladder descending to area **25**. Nearby rests a pedal-operated pottery wheel on which sits a vase. On a small table next to the pottery wheel is a sculpture of a man crucified on a wicked-looking tree. Leaning against the wall nearby is a collection of old paintings.

In the center of the room are two large wooden tables covered with beakers, tubes, jars, and two small oil-fueled burners. Low bookcases filled with books about chemistry, astrology, astronomy, botany, and history line the east wall. Between these bookcases is a door leading to a semi-circular room containing a blackened fireplace flanked by a pair of tall, slender windows looking out over the river.

The western portion of the room contains a secret room (area **29**). The *illusionary walls* hiding the secret room appear to be fitted with tall bookcases, stuffed with ancient, moldering tomes. If a PC removes one of these illusory books from the illusory bookcases and flips through it, he or she has the vague perception that the book in question is boring and contains nothing of interest.



In the south section of the room, a wrought-iron spiral staircase ascends to the next level. Hanging by wires from the ceiling, near the staircase, is a skeleton with each bone labeled in red ink.

29. Secret Room. A 10'-square area of the western portion of area **28** has been sectioned off by three *illusionary walls* (indicated with dotted lines on the map). This area contains a magic wardrobe that works in conjunction with the wardrobe in area **17** and can be used to *teleport* between these two areas. Sitting on a wrought-iron stand next to the wardrobe is Eric's *crystal ball*.

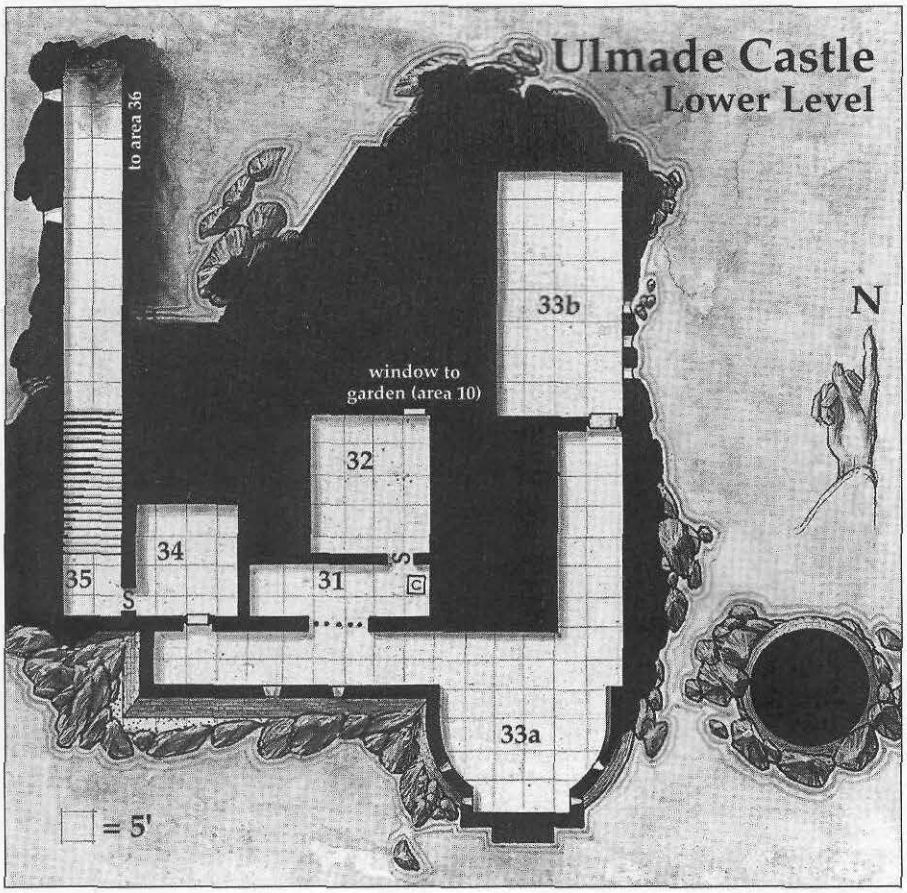
A shelf against the west wall holds a collection of old junk: dolls, books on various cults, some bone necklaces, knives, blank books, sheet music, a lute, a box of harp strings, and a cobweb-covered flute. An old jester's suit with bells lies on the floor next to the wardrobe and the *crystal ball*'s stand.

An apparently blank book sits on the jester suit's lap. This is actually Eric's most valuable spellbook. All the spells written in this book are *invisible*. A *gem of seeing*, *true seeing* spell, or similar magic is required to read the book. The book contains the following spells: 6th—*chain lightning, conjure animals, control weather, death fog, death spell, disintegrate, globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion, permanent illusion, programmed illusion, project image, reincarnation, shades, stone to flesh, true seeing;* 7th—*banishment, delayed blast fireball, duo-dimension, finger of death, mass invisibility, monster summoning V, phase door, shadow walk, statue, teleport without error, vanish;* 8th—*incendiary cloud, mass charm, maze, trap the soul;* 9th—*energy drain, gate, imprisonment, meteor swarm, power word kill, shape change.*

A secret niche behind one of the shelves contains a small chest with a poison needle trap (Type F poison). The chest contains 2,000 pp, a *deck of many things*, and Eric's other two spellbooks. While inside the niche, these items are *invisible*. They become visible when they are removed. If returned to the niche, the items become *invisible* again.

The first of the remaining spellbooks is bound in human skin and locked with a latch. Its first page is protected with an *explosive runes* spell that causes 6d4+6 points of damage to the reader with no saving throw allowed. The book contains the following spells: 1st—*chill touch, detect undead;* 2nd—*spectral hand;* 3rd—*feign death, hold undead, vampiric touch;* 4th—*contagion, enervation;* 5th—*animate dead, magic jar, summon shadow.*

Eric's final spellbook is much thicker and bound in a deep burgundy leather. A poison needle trap (Type F poison) is built into its latch. This book contains the following spells: 1st—*armor, change self, detect magic, erase, find familiar, magic missile, read magic, shield, shocking grasp, sleep, spider climb, wall of fog;* 2nd—*alter self, blindness, continual darkness, darkness 15' radius, deafness, detect good, detect invisibility, invisibility, know alignment, levitate, mirror image, summon swarm, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, whispering wind;* 3rd—*dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, fly, hold person, lightning bolt, monster summoning I, protection from good 10' radius, secret page, wraithform;* 4th—*confusion, detect scrying, dimension door, fire trap, hallucinatory terrain, ice storm, illusionary wall, magic mirror, massmorph,*



improved invisibility, polymorph other, polymorph self, wall of fire, wall of ice, wizard eye; 5th—*advanced illusion, avoidance, chaos, seeming, cloudkill, cone of cold, conjure elemental, contact other plane, dismissal, distance distortion, domination, dream, extension II, feeblemind, magic jar, major creation, passwall, sending, shadow door, stone shape, summon shadow, teleport, wall of iron, wall of force, transmute rock to mud.*

Level Five

30. Observatory. This is the highest room in the castle. It is a circular chamber with a high ceiling and windows on all sides. A door in the east wall leads to a bridge and the prison tower. In the south section of the room is a wrought-iron spiral staircase leading down. In the center of the room is a large, circular brown carpet embroidered with snakes biting their own tails. Standing against the north wall is the counterpart to Eric's *magic mirror.* (See "Eric's Wagon" section for a complete description.)

In front of one of the eastern windows is a telescope and other astronomical equipment (worth 2,000 gp for the set). A 2'-long silver scroll case worth 100 gp contains two artistically drawn celestial maps. Next to the telescope is a large, gilded harp (worth 250 gp).

Lower Level

Unless otherwise noted, the walls, floors, and ceilings of the lower level have been smoothly carved from the rock on which Castle Ulmade stands. All doors are 7 feet tall, 3 feet wide, and made of thick oak with iron hinges. Unless otherwise noted, windows are 2 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and stuffed full of bones and skulls mixed with mortar to keep out the light of day.

31. Wine Cellar. This long, narrow room is cold and dark. A squeaky, wrought-iron gate stands ajar in the middle of the south wall. Against the west wall are two large wine racks. Many bottles are strewn about the floor. A few bottles are left on the tallest rack.

A rotting wooden ladder against the east wall ends before a trapdoor in the ceiling leading to area 7. The trapdoor has been *wizard locked* by Eric.

In the floor in front of the northern secret door, underneath a layer of dust and cobwebs, is a keyhole. The skeleton key from area **21** opens the secret door.

32. Forgotten Room. This chamber was the secret treasure chamber of the Baron. A short, wide window of leaded glass is positioned high in the northern wall, at ground level with the garden outside. From the garden, this window is hidden from view behind a tangle of bushes.

Piled against the west wall is the following treasure: three large, unlocked chests containing 1,200 gp each; a 5'-tall marble statue of a nude female, crafted by a famous artist and worth 1,000 gp; a *shield +3;* and a finely crafted wooden chess set worth 500 gp. The chess set rests atop a finely wrought mahogany table carved in the shape of two grasping claws. Adorning one of the table's "talons" is a *ring of spider climbing* that allows its wearer to duplicate the effects of a *spider climb* spell thrice per day.

33a. Wights' Lair. The stench in this chamber is nearly unbearable. The rotten carcasses of deer and sheep are strewn about with a few human bones. Eric's assistant, Lucius, sometimes abducts stray villagers or travelers and throws their bodies down here when he's done with them. However, most of the time he satisfies the wights' hunger with the flesh of animals.

Eric's wights are normally encountered here. If and when the lich desires to set these creatures upon the PCs, he can unlock the trapdoor in area **31** (which has been *wizard locked*) at any time, from anywhere in the castle.

Wights (12): hp 19 each; see "Eric's Servants" for complete statistics.

33b. Empty Room. The lock on the door to this room has rusted away. Three windows along the east wall allow the cold and dampness to enter. Some snow has accumulated near the base of the windows, while the walls and floor are icy

and slippery. The room is otherwise empty and unoccupied.

34. Bricked Up. The southern door to this chamber is bricked up with crude blocks of stone, which have been carelessly layered and sloppily mortared. The PCs can use a *stone shape, transmute rock to mud,* or similar spell to pass this area. Alternatively, provided they have picks, they can tear the wall down. The wall is poorly made and can be pulled down in a couple of hours. The chamber beyond is filled with cobwebs. A two-inch layer of dust covers the floor.

Covered with cobwebs, sitting in niches in the walls, are busts of former Ulmade family members. A secret passage in the west wall opens when the head of the Baron's bust is twisted to the right.

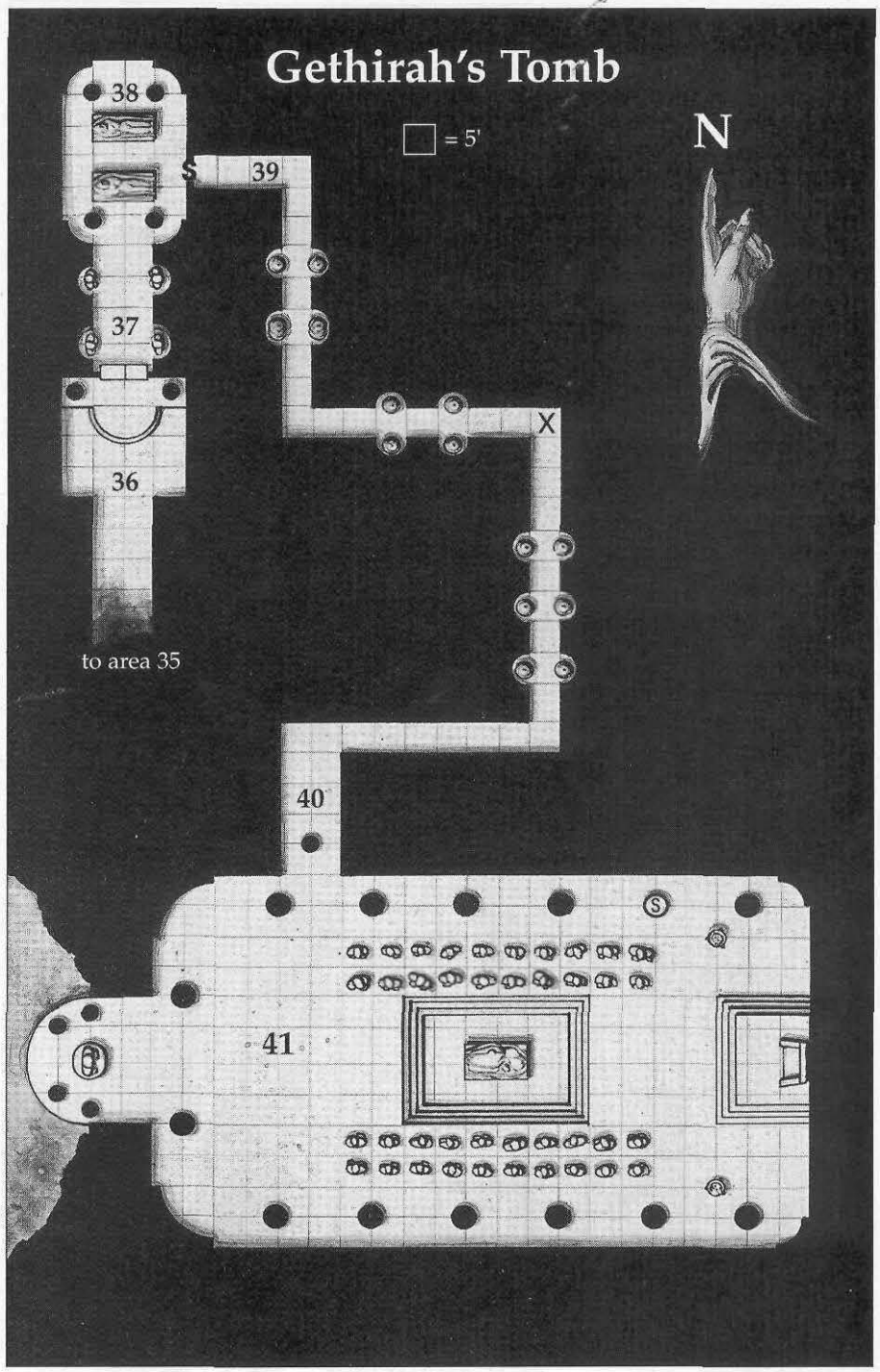
35. Stairway and Passage. Beyond the secret door in area **34**, a steep staircase leads down into darkness, beneath and behind the cascading waterfall. The sound of the waterfall is extremely loud here. A pair of tall, narrow windows in the western wall are carved into the cliffside behind the waterfall. The passageway is as long as the waterfall is wide, and it leads north to area **36**.

Gethirah's Tomb

The way to Gethirah's tomb has been built into the cliffs on the northern edge of the waterfall. A sloping passageway (area **39**) winds its way down to areas **40** and **41**, which are beneath the passageway that runs behind the curtain of the waterfall (area **35**).

36. Ulmade Tomb Entrance. At the end of the hall is a square chamber with a 13'-tall set of arched double doors. Carved into the keystone of this arch is the face of a beautiful woman. Pillars carved to resemble knights in full field plate flank the doors. The doors stand slightly ajar.

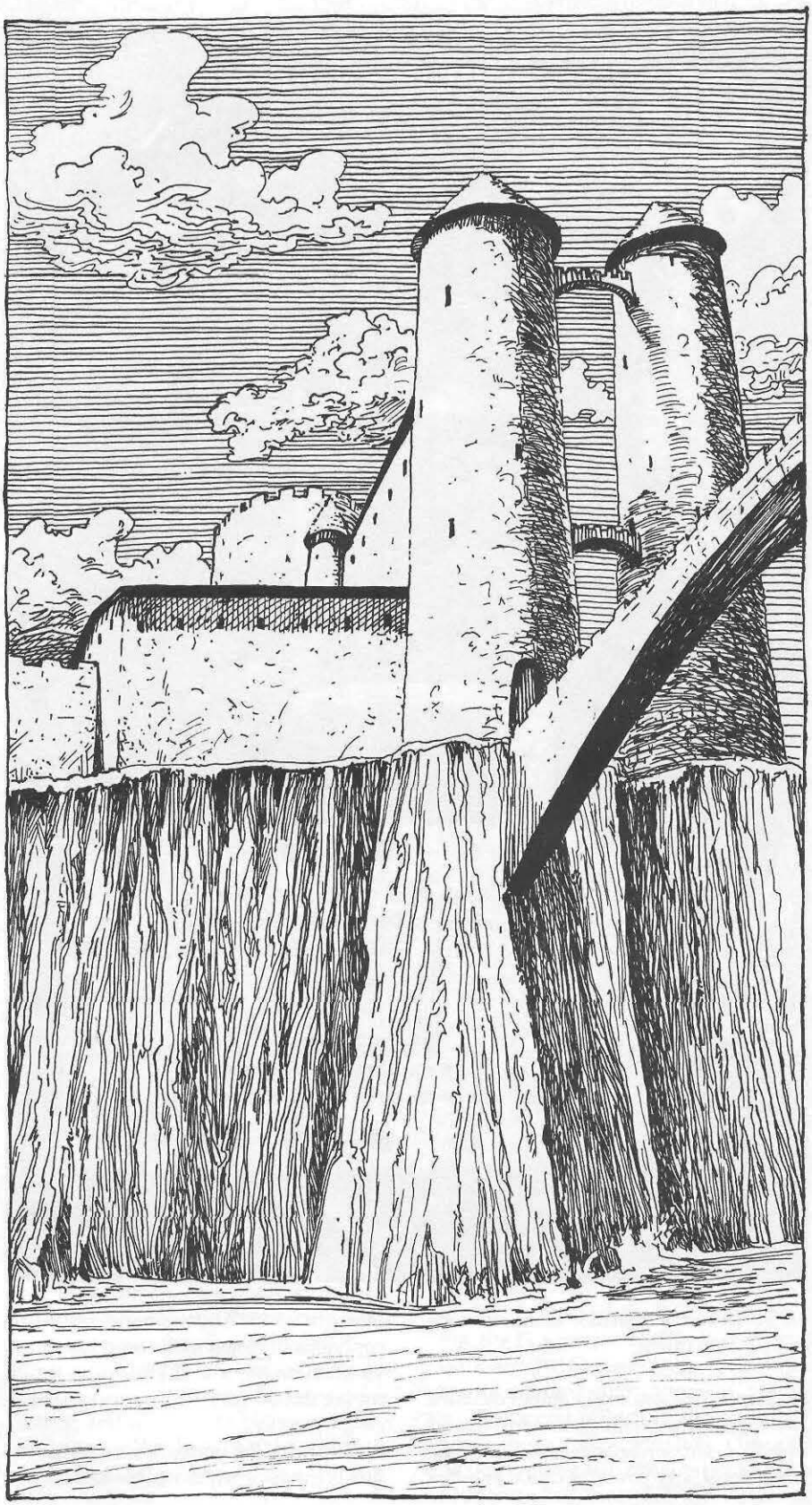
37. Sentinels' Hall. This tiled hallway slants upward from area **36**. The tiles on the floor are shaped like interconnecting black and white dragons. Cobweb-covered statues of knights in full platemail stand in niches along the east and west



walls. The suits of armor seem ominous but pose no threat.

38. Tomb. This vaulted chamber contains two stone sarcophagi. Removing the lid of either sarcophagus requires a single character's Strength of 19 or a combined Strength of 45. Anyone removing a sarcophagus lid must make a saving throw vs. spell or suffer a –1 penalty to future saving throws until a *remove curse* spell is cast.

The lid of the northernmost sarcophagus is made of white marble and carved



in the likeness of a woman wearing a long dress. The corpse inside the stone coffin is that of Gethirah's mother, Elaine. It wears a long white dress, and a veil covers its face. A pearl necklace worth 500 gp is strung around its neck.

The southernmost sarcophagus has the marble likeness of a man carved into the lid, but the sarcophagus is empty.

Four bronze braziers sit in each of the chamber's corners, their coals long since burned out. The secret door in the east wall opens when a loose, dragon-shaped tile in the floor is stepped upon.

39. Dark Passage. This cobweb-choked, 5'-wide passage is dust-filled and dank. It twists down from the secret door in area **38**, eventually reaching area **40**. The tiles on the floor are shaped like interconnecting devas and demons. Niches along both walls contain large clay urns, sealed shut with wax. Within each urn is a mummy that bursts out when the PCs reach the center of the hall. (The exact area is designated on the map by an **X**.)

Mummies (14): AC 3; MV 6; HD 6+3; hp 33 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1–12; SA *fear*, disease; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; can only be harmed by magical weapons, which inflict only half damage; SZ M; ML 15; INT low (6); AL LE; XP 3,000; *MM*/261.

40. Blade Trap. A pillar carved into the likeness of a horned man with bat wings stands in the center of the hall. Its arms form the arches above each of the doorways flanking the pillar. If anyone but Eric or Gethirah walks around this pillar, blades eject from the walls, inflicting 2d12 points of damage. These blades have THAC0 10 for attack purposes and are dripping with Type D poison. (If the PCs did not detect the trap beforehand, do not apply Dexterity modifiers to their armor class.) Those who are aware of the trap may dodge the blades by making a successful Tumbling proficiency check.

41. The Final Encounter. During the day, light streams into this vaulted chamber through a large platform curtained behind the waterfall. A 13'-tall alabaster statue of a young nude man stands on the platform facing the inner chamber. This is the statue that Luther used to

communicate with his vile god. Before Luther's keep was brought down, some of Luther's surviving servants managed to replace this statue with an imitation and hide the real one. After the siege, the king's men destroyed the statue's replica and thought the matter done, unaware that the real statue was transferred secretly to Ulmade Castle and given into Eric's care. The statue radiates intense magic and evil. While Gethirah sits in the tomb, the statue whispers to him in an attempt to persuade Gethirah to return to the ways of evil. Although the statue is indeed a powerful magical item, it is also extremely fragile. If the PCs knock over the statue, thousands of hairline cracks cover it entirely. Black blood seeps from these cracks and then, slowly, the statue crumbles to dust.

The eastern wall is covered with a large mural of fiends running wild in a city's streets. Anyone who views this mural must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or see the fiends actually killing the people in the mural. This has the effect of a *fear* spell. A marble throne, ornately engraved with skulls, is positioned in front of the mural. Bronze censers on tripods flank the throne on both sides (indicated by the small circles on the map), their coals magically enchanted to burn sweet incense constantly. Anyone other than Gethirah or Eric who stands within 10 feet of these censers must make a saving throw vs. spell or suffer the effects of the 4th-level wizard spell *confusion*. The *confusion* lasts for 20 rounds. PCs who are unaffected must continue making saving throws every round they spend within 10 feet of the incense burners.

Near the chamber's walls, ornately carved pillars twist into the darkness. A secret door in one of these pillars conceals a stone spiral staircase. This staircase climbs to a tunnel that runs north beneath the river. The tunnel leads to another staircase that climbs to a secret door in the side of a tree above ground, atop the cliffs on the river's northern shore. It was this route that Gethirah used to escape his tomb originally.

A sunken area in the center of the chamber contains a large alabaster sarcophagus, ornately carved and inlaid with gold. The total value of this gold is 1,000 gp. The lid, which has been carved into the likeness of Gethirah, lies slightly askew. Lying in the sarcophagus is the *black staff* (see "New Magical Item" sidebar). Gethirah's platemail, helmet, and bastard sword are normally contained within the sarcophagus as well, but if Michael is present (see below), these items have been removed.

Flanking the sarcophagus on both sides are life-sized clay statues of men in ornate armor. These are actually the remnants of Gethirah's original army. At his command, the clay crumbles away, and forty skeletons wearing platemail and carrying longswords and kite shields await his orders.

Skeletons (40): AC 3 (2 with shield); MV 9; HD 1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 4; Dmg 1–8 (longsword); SD immune to *sleep, charm,* and *hold* spells; immune to poison, paralysis, cold-based spells, and death magic; edged weapons inflict half damage; piercing weapons inflict 1 point of damage (plus magical modifiers); SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/315.

Encountering Gethirah

Since his abduction, Michael has been sitting on his throne with his head buried in his hands, trying to block out the whisperings of the statue and the words of his uncle, Eric. Due to the statue and Eric's sinister influence, Michael's memory has been almost completely restored; Gethirah, as he now calls himself, wears a suit of ornately crafted black *platemail +3* (giving him AC –3) and carries a *bastard sword of life stealing +2* as well as a gem-encrusted dagger worth 500 gp. A dragon-shaped helmet lies on the steps before the throne, as if angrily thrown there.

Gethirah continues to be tormented by his experiences in Stillwater and his friendship with the villagers and the PCs. However, if the PCs do not find him after three days, Gethirah's alignment permanently shifts back to chaotic evil.

Meeting Gethirah in his tomb is a delicate situation indeed. When the PCs confront him, he is torn between his two halves; he is depressed and quick to anger. He has experienced how it feels to be valued by people who are not driven by hate. He has even felt love for friends. But now he remembers his true identity, and Gethirah must either put those fond memories of Stillwater out of his mind or forsake his dark destiny.

If and when the PCs arrive at Gethirah's tomb, Eric *teleports* into the chamber and attacks them openly. When he attacks the PCs, he drops his human disguise and appears to them in his normal, hideous undead state. If Lucius is still alive and somewhere in the castle, he *teleports* with Eric and attacks PCs with his longsword.

During the battle between Eric and the PCs, Michael sits on his throne and holds his head in his hands. The statue at the far end of the tomb continues to whisper in an attempt to persuade Gethirah to attack the PCs. (The statue's whispers echo throughout the chamber.) Unless otherwise persuaded by the PCs,

New Magical Item

The *Black Staff*

This staff is 6 feet long and made of an unfamiliar dark metal (not of this plane). Silvery, spiderlike runes seem to crawl along the staff's entire length. These runes are actually a form of tanar'ri script. If a *comprehend languages* spell is cast upon the staff, the spellcaster can read the following poem:

Go forth with Legion child,
And march on holy ground.
Be my hand that falls,
And tear high cities down.
Gather men before you.
Proudly bear your crest.
Embrace the weak survivors,
And torture all the rest.

PCs might recall this poem from the puppet show in the "Eric Arrives" encounter. The staff has 25 charges remaining and has the power to *animate dead* as a 20th-level priest. The only way to destroy the *staff* is by touching it to the footprint of a good-aligned priest of at least 20th level; casting a *legend lore* spell upon the staff enables the PCs to divine this weakness; an *identify* spell is insufficient. Award 5,000 XP to PCs who destroy the staff.

Key NPCs

Gethirah Kugothan (A.K.A. Michael), human male APal10 (F10): AC 6 (without armor); MV 12; hp 85; THAC0 10; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (due to Strength); Str 17 (+1/+1), Dex 18, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 18; SZ M (6'1"); ML 18; AL CE (LG); XP 10,000.

Spells (Gethirah only): 1st—*bestow curse, cure light wounds.*

Michael is tall and angelically handsome with long, pale hair and alabaster skin. He has high cheekbones, and his eyes are a startling pale grey. He bears a savage scar on his breast just above his heart, as well as its counterpart on his back. These scars were caused when he was impaled by the sword of Michael Lathendale. Michael is treated as a 10th-level fighter with no special abilities.

Gethirah is immune to all forms of disease and has a bonus of +2 to all saving throws. Once he regains his memory, he gains the following anti-paladin abilities:

- *Detect good* up to 60 feet;
- Inflict 20 points of damage by touch once per day (opposite of the paladin's *lay on hands* ability);
- *Cause disease* by touch twice per week;
- Aura of *protection from good.* This aura extends in a 1' radius around the anti-paladin at all times;
- Command undead as an evil priest of 8th level;
- Backstab for +4 to hit and double damage (as a 1st-level thief).

Eric Ulmade (lich): AC –2; MV 6; HD 11 (W18); hp 62; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10; SA paralyzation; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph,* cold, electricity, insanity, and death spells; SZ M; ML 18; INT supra-genius (19); AL LE; XP 8,000; *MM*/222; *ring of protection +2, amulet of proof against detection and location.*

Spells (5/5/5/5/5/3/3/2/1): 1st—*chill touch, sleep, wall of fog* (×2), *magic missile;* 2nd—*continual darkness, deafness, invisibility, summon swarm, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter;* 3rd—*vampiric touch, fireball, fly, lightning bolt, wraithform;* 4th—*dimension door, ice storm, polymorph other, improved invisibility, wall of fire;* 5th—*seeming, cloudkill, teleport* (×2), *cone of cold;* 6th—*chain lightning, death fog, stone to flesh;* 7th—*delayed blast fireball, finger of death, phase door;* 8th—*incendiary cloud, trap the soul;* 9th—*meteor swarm.*

Eric is a bitter soul who feels that his undead state was forced upon him by his god. Therefore, he does not revel in his undead power the way most liches tend to. Eric was an artist, poet, and bard before he started studying black magic. Luther eventually commanded him to make the transition to his present undead state, but Eric still desperately holds on to his arts and crafts (albeit nowadays his art is pretty twisted). It is his need for identity that forces Eric to use magic to appear as a living, breathing human, especially when he is dealing with other people. To disguise himself, Eric casts either a *seeming* or *polymorph self* spell. Although the *seeming* spell allows Eric to mask his identity for as long as 12 hours, his body still smells musty and old; his appearance is still nothing but an illusion. For this reason, he uses the *polymorph self* spell when dealing with people closely, since the *polymorph self* spell actually changes his body to flesh. Eric often appears as a young, handsome man with long black hair and a small silver hoop hanging from his ear. He wears red and white checkered hose, a black doublet, and a billowy white shirt with ruff and lace. Eric wears a *ring of protection +2* at all times. While in his castle, he usually stays in areas **28** and **29**. When outside his castle, he wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location.*

His true appearance is quite different. Half of his skull is covered by a dried layer of mummified skin. The other half is yellowing bone. Red embers burn in his eye sockets, and what's left of his hair is pulled back into a dusty braid. His clothing is the same as above, but old and tattered.

Lucius (werewolf): AC 5; MV 15; HD 4+3; hp 32; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 5–11 (2d4+3); SA surprise, lycanthropy, 18/35 Strength (+1 to hit, +3 damage); SD hit only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (10); AL CE; XP 420; *MM*/240 (modified); *amulet of proof against detection and location,* longsword.

In human form, Lucius is a weathered man with long brown hair and a permanent frown on his face. The only time he ever smiles is when he's killing someone; his lips twist back in a "V" shape, exposing his long, yellow canine teeth.

Lucius wears a brown hooded cloak and a leather jerkin. When he travels with Eric, Lucius also wears an *amulet of proof against detection and location.* When fighting in human form, Lucius employs a nonmagical longsword with a wolf-headed pommel. The weapon inflicts 1d8+3 points of damage (due to Lucius's high Strength).

Gethirah rises from his throne, draws his sword, and commands the skeletons to attack the PCs after the third round of combat. Though he is rent with grief for destroying his friends in this manner, this evil act serves as atonement to his vile god. At this point, however, Gethirah does not attack the PCs himself but only watches as his undead uncle and his skeletal servants fight the heroes. Gethirah watches the combat for three more rounds, after which he attacks the PCs with his sword. If he can move close enough to a PC, Gethirah uses his *cause disease* ability or his *lay on hands* ability to inflict 20 points of damage.

Smart PCs can avoid combat with Gethirah and his skeletons. The keys to saving Michael from the path of evil are the wooden statuettes that he carved for the PCs. (See "A Few Days in Stillwater" for details.) The wood carvings are symbolic of Gethirah's free will as well as his ability to feel emotions other than hate—emotions such as love and gratitude. If the PCs show these wood carvings to Gethirah, he falls to his knees and breaks into tears. The clay statues that fill the tomb crumble to dust, and the bones of the skeletal guards clatter to the floor

harmlessly. If the skeletons have already been animated, they stop attacking the PCs and fall to the floor in heaps of bone and armor. At this point, Michael resurfaces and Gethirah is forever lost; his anti-paladin abilities are gone forever, and he becomes an ordinary fighter. He weeps openly for one round and then turns on Eric, aiding the PCs in their fight against the lich. If this occurs, Eric fights the PCs and also concentrates on debilitating Michael. Eric screams at the statue of Darkness, appealing to the god for some kind of aid. Darkness does not respond.

If the PCs and Michael defeat Eric, Michael throws down his *bastard sword of life stealing* and approaches the statue of Darkness. He looks into the statue's face and says, "You have spoken your last words to me. From this day forward, my ears are closed to you!" He then charges the statue, striking it with his shoulders, causing it to fall and shatter on the floor, blood seeping from the cracked pieces. If the PCs follow the whispering to its source and topple the statue themselves, Michael's doubts are immediately replaced with a firm resolve, and her says, "You have silenced the voice of Darkness. Its whispers can no longer haunt my every thought. Well done, my friends."

If the PCs fail to show the wooden carvings, they must find some other way to save Michael. The success or failure of their attempt should hinge on skilled roleplaying, not random die rolls. An impassioned speech convincing Michael to turn against his dark destiny could work just as well if delivered properly. Otherwise, the PCs must defeat the lich, the anti-paladin, the werewolf, and the skeletons all at the same time.

If and when Eric is destroyed, his essence drifts from his undead remains to his phylactery in area **26**. Here he waits patiently to possess an unwitting passerby using his *magic jar* spell. Once the lich has found a suitable body, he uses the host to exact vengeance on those who dared stand against him. Eric does not threaten to kill Michael regardless of the circumstances, even if it seems likely that Gethirah's evil destiny might never be fulfilled.

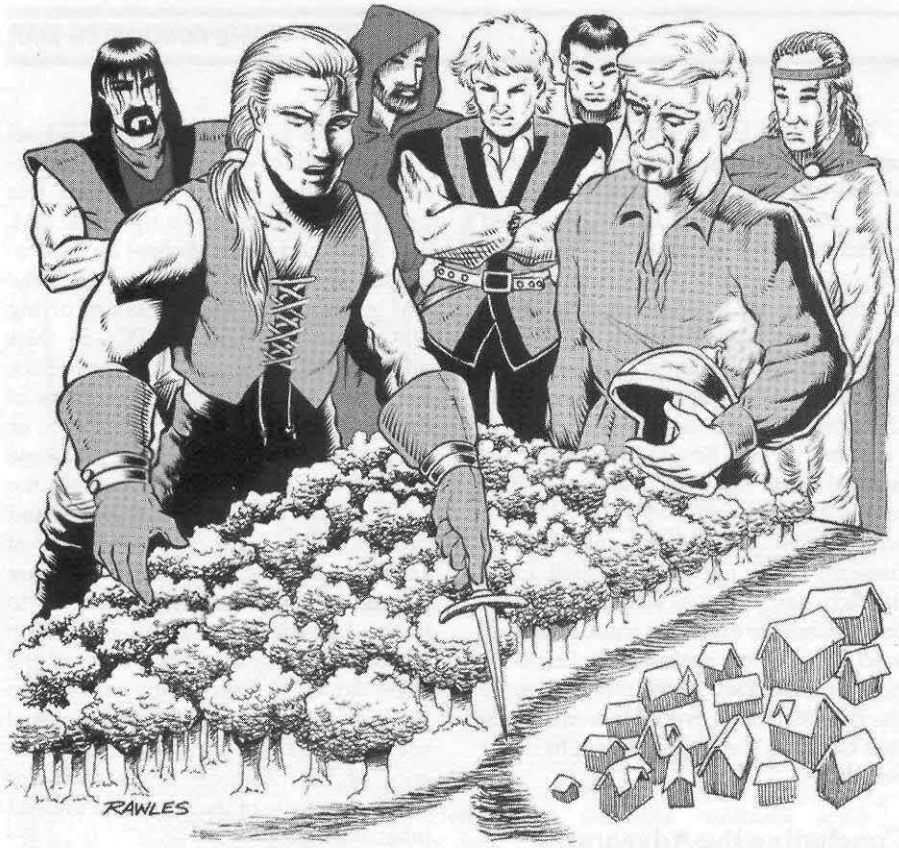
Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs do not succeed in turning Michael from the path of evil, they must either fight the anti-paladin (as mentioned above), subdue him, or flee. If they flee, they leave behind a powerful enemy who is then free to terrorize the people of the kingdom.

If the PCs succeed in turning Michael from the path of evil, they gain a powerful ally and a good friend. From this point, Michael's future is up to the DM. The DM could make Michael a PC, turning him over to one of the players. If the DM intends to use Michael as a recurring NPC, he could join the PCs in their adventures for a short while, move back to Stillwater and study the writings of the Phoenix under the priest Joseph, or disappear only to resurface at some future date. He could even seek out the reincarnation of Michael Lathendale and protect him from the servants of Darkness (a likely possibility for future adventures). Michael has a legal claim to Castle Ulmade but has no interest in residing there. If the PCs recovered the deed hidden in area **18**, they are free to retain the castle for their own personal use, provided they can tolerate the presence of the creatures living there (or purge the castle of its living and undead inhabitants).

If the PCs successfully turn the anti-paladin back to the way of good, the DM should award the group 10,000 XP in addition to whatever experience they earned for slain monsters and good roleplaying. Ω

Nodwick
by Aaron Williams
YOU'VE SAVED ME FROM A DESTINY OF EVIL. THANK YOU, MY FRIENDS!
YOU'RE WELCOME, MICHAEL!
THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL, ARTAX! I ADMIT THAT I USUALLY THINK THE WORST OF YOU AND YEAGAR, BUT AFTER YOUR DEEDS TODAY, I SEE THAT YOU TWO CAN BE COMPASSIONATE. MAYBE A NEW DAY IS DAWN...
CRUNCH
WE ALMOST FORGOT TO DESTROY THE EVIL STATUE!
THANKS. I WAS ABOUT TO BECOME ILL!



The deadliest bandits are the ones who plan ahead.

INTO THE NEST OF VIPERS

BY MATTHEW G. ADKINS

The perfect poison

Artwork by Fred Rawles
Cartography by Craig Zipse

Matt is an X-ray technician in the U.S. Air Force. He wishes to thank his wife for her endless patience and the Brigade for all the old times. This is Matthew's second appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures.

"Into the Nest of Vipers" is an AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure set in The Vast. The adventure takes place in the year 1369 DR, but the DM is free to modify the date, provided the action takes place after the Time of Troubles and the appearance of dead magic zones. This module is designed for 3–5 PCs of levels 1–3 (about 9 total levels).

Spellcasters will find their abilities severely inhibited in one part of this adventure, so parties with a large number of clerics and mages are not recommended. The PCs should be of mostly good alignments, especially lawful, since the quest to cure the afflicted town of Sevenecho is mostly a charitable act.

Before running this adventure, the Dungeon Master should carefully review the "Dead Magic Zones" sidebar, as well as the statistics of the main adversaries. Also, the DM is advised to reexamine the rules on overland movement and movement through various terrain.

Adventure Background

Calispar Delgorth, a specialty priest of Talona (goddess of disease and poison), ran a secret workshop in Procampur for years, selling venom and experimenting with new poisons until he was driven out of the city by priests of Torm in early 1367 DR. After his expulsion, Calispar joined with a group of mercenaries known as the Red Brigade, who welcomed his clerical magic and special skills. The leader of the band, Cedric Ravajar, included Calispar in all of the company's decisions, and the two men became staunch allies, if not friends.

In 1368 DR, the Brigade's scouts discovered a dead magic area in Brynwood Forest, located near Sevenecho, while on a routine scouting mission for a minor noble. The zone completely surrounded a low, mostly barren hill. Cedric made note of the zone's location yet told no one else in the mercenary company of the discovery, save Calispar. The pair of scouts who had originally identified the

dead magic area disappeared shortly thereafter.

Late in 1368 DR, The Red Brigade disbanded when Cedric announced his retirement. Most of the Brigade's members went their separate ways, but a small group left with Cedric, including Calispar. In secrecy, Cedric and his followers (those he could trust) returned to the dead magic zone in Brynwood. There, the mercenaries built an underground haven and began to raid merchant caravans on the Glorming Pass. By the turn of 1369 DR, the Vipers, as the bandits now called themselves, were well known and feared. Numerous agencies and bounty hunters have tried to find the group's hidden base, but all attempts have failed, mainly due to the dead magic zone surrounding it.

During the construction of the Vipers' base (called the Vipers' Nest by the brigands), a special room was built for Calispar at his request. This chamber lies partly outside the area affected by the dead magic zone. Here, Calispar has carried on his research. It wasn't long until he discovered that plant-based toxins whose ingredients were grown in the dead magic zone were unaffected by magic. Calispar hypothesized that these plants "soaked up" the essence of the zone. Excited by his discovery, Calispar immediately realized the potential of magic-immune poisons, especially if they were placed in the right hands.

Calispar contacted the Shadowkind, a small, elite Assassins' Guild based in Procampur. He told the skeptical group of his ability to brew poisons impervious to magic, which would be invaluable to their guild. He offered to create a dozen vials of magic-resistant poison for the Shadowkind in exchange for their help in quietly eliminating a few of his enemies, including the high priest of Torm in Procampur. The Shadowkind agreed to the bargain, provided that Calispar could provide proof of the poison's special power. Calispar accepted the guild's counter terms and arranged to demonstrate the poison's effects in the town of Sevenecho. As part of the bargain, the guild sent a representative, Autton Shadowshroud, to oversee the "test" and to witness the poison's effects.

For the Dungeon Master

Four days before this adventure begins, Calispar met with Autton at the southern tip of Brynwood Forest, far away from the Vipers' Nest. After ensuring the assassin was alone, Calispar blindfolded Autton and led him back to the Nest. Despite his efforts to keep the Nest's location secret, Calispar neglected to cover the trail he and Autton left through the forest. Unfortunately for the Vipers, a ranger named Dura Gerathu was patrolling the woods and discovered Calispar and Autton's tracks. Dura had been searching for the Vipers' Nest for a few months, at the behest of the priests of Tymora in Sevenecho. Suspicious of unknown tracks in the woods, Dura followed them. The trail led him straight to the Vipers' hideout. The hill and its dead magic properties were known to Dura, though he had never visited the area himself. His careful searching of the perimeter revealed the existence of northern and southern secret doors. Dura easily reasoned that the north door was seldom used, based on the scarcity of tracks. He surveyed the place for a few hours, finally departing as the sun began to set.

Dura visited a friend known as The Lady of Misty Vale, a druid who lived in seclusion not too far from the Nest. The elated Dura spent several hours with his companion, relating all he knew about the base. The Lady suggested that he continue gathering more information about the base and its occupants before reporting to Umast, the high priest in Sevenecho. Dura went home to a good night's sleep before returning to the base the next morning.

Dura observed the structure for the better part of a day, casing the grounds and determining the extent of the dead magic zone. As luck would have it, a small group of Vipers, led by Cedric, left the base to gather firewood. After a few hours, they returned and went back inside. Confident that he had obtained enough information for Umast, the high priest in Sevenecho, Dura quietly set out for his tiny cabin and prepared a letter to send to Umast via his trained falcon, Gale. What Dura did not know was that Cedric had observed his departure and arranged the ranger's demise. Dura's fate is detailed later in the "Finding the Ranger" section.

The day before the start of this adventure, Calispar and Autton set out to Sevenecho, carrying with them a vial of magic-immune poison. To keep the location of the Vipers' Nest secret, Autton was again blindfolded until Calispar had taken him a safe distance from the lair. Traveling down Glorming Pass and disguised as simple travelers, the duo entered Sevenecho late on the night before the adventure begins. There, they picked a random well, dropped the vial down it, and waited to see its effect. Within just a few short hours, people who had imbibed water from the well began to seek out the local priests for magical aid.

Diluted by the well water, the poison was not immediately fatal. However, the poison remained potent enough to kill a few townsfolk. Within a few hours, the poison in the well had been completely diluted or consumed. The frantic priests of Tymora discovered that their spells and potions did nothing to cure the poison or identify its origin. They were forced to rely on their nonmagical healing skills to minister to their patients.

Autton proclaimed the test a success. On the day the adventure begins, before dawn, Calispar and Autton return to the Vipers' Nest, where Calispar begins producing the dozen vials of poison for delivery to the Shadowkind.

Time is important in this adventure. The PCs haven't long to find a cure for the poison and prevent Calispar from concocting a new supply of poison. A window of 28–30 hours is recommended for the PCs to complete their mission, but the timeframe can be altered at the DM's discretion to keep the adventure as suspenseful as possible.

Arrival in Sevenecho

Sevenecho is not fully detailed in this adventure, as most of the action takes place away from the town. What the Dungeon Master needs to know is that Sevenecho is a small town, little more than a hamlet, that functions as a market for the Vast's widely dispersed farmers. Also, by virtue of its plentiful wells and

connection to Glorming Pass, the burg acts as a stopover for merchant caravans and adventuring parties. Sevenecho is governed by a loose council of elders drawn from the town's most prominent families, which include the Sevenechoes, Scantshars, Evenhands, Jespers, and the Dermonts.

Sevenecho's most prominent feature is the Worried Wyvern Inn, established in 1338 DR by the Sevenechoes and still owned by them. The tavern is well known to adventurers and traders in the area, for it is ranked by most as one of the finest in the Vast. The Worried Wyvern is a massive structure that started out as a modest, two-story inn but has since had many additions, to the point that it takes up an entire hill. A multitude of dormers, side wings, and halls spring off of the central building at odd points, giving the entire place a chaotic look. The Worried Wyvern is known as much for its excellent beer and sharp cheese as it is for the clean rooms and friendly service.

When the PCs arrive in Sevenecho on the 1st of Eleint, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> You enter the town of Sevenecho in the early evening. The hamlet consists mostly of one- or two-story buildings set widely apart. Scattered about are the hulking forms of five old manor houses, no doubt residences of the local nobility. To the east is a temple. To the west sits a large clearing packed with wagons, tents, and horses. Here, the merchant caravans are bracing for another chilly night as they and their mounts rest for the next day's journey. One thing you quickly notice is the large number of wells that dot the unpaved streets of this town. It seems every major area has at least one well, while you count five in the merchant's flat.
>
> An odd-looking structure known as the Worried Wyvern Inn sits atop the only hill in town. The tavern is a random arrangement of wings, halls, and dormers. Only the central structure, once a simple lodge from the looks of it, holds any semblance of organization. From within this middle building, you hear the buzz of conversation and the shouts of drunken patrons. A warm, yellow light emerges from around the door to the center building of the inn.

If the PCs go inside, they find themselves within the central room of the Worried Wyvern Inn. The barroom is large and packed with tables and chairs, with a stone fireplace set into the northern wall. A long counter runs the entire breadth of the eastern wall, behind which stands the inn's proprietor, Beliot Sevenecho. Patrons interested in spending the night in one of the Wyvern's many well appointed rooms must speak to Beliot and obtain the room key. Prices for lodging, food, and drink are standard as per the *Player's Handbook*, although the local sharp cheese sells for 1 gp per wheel, as opposed to the normal 4 sp.

Presently, the barroom is packed with patrons, all eating, drinking, and talking. The PCs may associate freely with those in attendance, meeting a wide variety of merchants, mercenaries, and simple country folk. Most are friendly enough, willing to converse with anyone who wishes to chat. The DM may insert as much or as little information, rumors, and stories as desired.

Beliot Sevenecho, human male F5: AC 6; MV 12; hp 48; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3 (with Strength bonus); Str 18/55 (+2/+3), Dex 9, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13; SZ M; ML 15; AL LN; XP 420; *leather armor +2, longsword +1, dagger* +2, longbow, 24 sheaf arrows.

Beliot stands 5'5" tall and weighs 210 lbs. Though quite large for his small frame, his arms, legs, and chest remain incredibly muscled. He keeps his head completely shaved and has gray eyes. He keeps his face clean shaven.

Beliot is the head of the Sevenecho family and current proprietor of the inn. Once an adventurer himself, he has long since retired to a quieter life. Beliot has a great love for stories and is known to give a free drink or two to an adventurer who provides him with an interesting or amusing tale.

Serving girls, 0-level human females (7): AC 10; MV 12; hp 4, 3 (×3), 2 (×2), 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Cha 16, roll 2d6+4 for other ability scores; ML 10; AL NG; dagger, 1d3 sp.

The serving girls are among the prettiest females in town. Beliot, a happily married man himself, firmly believes that their beauty enhances his business. The barmaids' comeliness often attracts unwanted advances from male patrons. It is for this reason that Beliot forces the girls to wear daggers strapped to their left arms. The hilts of the weapons stick out from under their blouse sleeves, providing a visual reminder that untoward attention will not be tolerated. If any patron gets rough with his girls, Beliot hastens to their defense, weapons bared.

The Morning After

This scene occurs the morning after the PCs arrive in Sevenecho. The boxed text assumes the PCs spent the night in the Worried Wyvern but may be modified if this is not the case. Early in the morning, sometime around 9:00 A.M., the PCs are awakened from their slumber by the sounds of banging and shouting. If the PCs investigate, read or paraphrase the following:

> Down the hall, the door to another room stands open, with a brightly garbed merchant near the threshold. Next to the door are several large, iron-bound chests stacked one on top of another. As you watch, a pair of burly guards carry another chest from inside the room and drop it onto the stack with a loud bang. The merchant curses loudly, shouting at the louts to be more careful with his merchandise. The mercenaries pay the man no mind as they go back into the room for another chest.

The merchant is Aklar Delkash. If the PCs approach him, he asks them their business while calling for his hired muscle. Though not hostile, Aklar is anxious about his valuables and assumes the PCs to be hostile until proven otherwise. If attacked, Aklar hides behind his guards, who defend him and his property until one of their number goes down. At that point, the rest must make a successful morale check every round or flee. If the PCs ask what is going on, Aklar apologizes for the noise but still eyes them warily. He then launches into a brief

story that the DM should read aloud to the players:

"My name is Aklar Delkash, a peddler in fine furs and rugs. I don't know if you have heard yet, but the word about town is that several people were poisoned last night. Some unknown person or persons polluted one of the town wells. The priests of Tymora are unable to help those infected, leaving them to die slowly as the venom kills them inside. Seems that this poison resists all magical attempts to purge or analyze it, making it impossible for the priests to cure!

"I don't know about you, but that fact makes me extremely nervous. Who knows how many other wells have been fouled since this one?! I'm leaving just as soon as these simpletons finish moving my goods. From what I've heard, the Tymorans are seeking adventurers to help them find the source of the poisoning. They're promising a reward. That they would pursue aid from such an unreliable source doesn't increase my confidence. No offense intended, of course. Now, if you will excuse me, I must return to supervising." Turning away from you, Aklar begins shouting anew at his hired swords, ordering them to hurry in their labor.

If the PCs don't investigate the noise outside their door or have no desire to speak with Aklar, they hear the news from Beliot. As they prepare to leave, Beliot passes along the above information and warns the PCs against being poisoned themselves. Either way, when the PCs enter the barroom, they find the chamber empty, a fact Beliot dolefully blames on the poisonings. The innkeeper stands alone behind his bar, more than willing to speak to the PCs if they approach him. From what he tells the PCs, most of the other travelers in Sevenecho were of the same mindset as Aklar and have already left town for safer destinations.

Aklar Delkash, 0-level human male (merchant): AC 10; MV 12; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; roll 2d6+4 for ability scores; ML 10; AL NG; dagger, chest key, 2d6 gp, 3d8 sp, 2d12 cp.

Aklar stands 5'4" tall and weighs 180 lbs. He is dark skinned, with black hair and large, bushy eyebrows. His eyes are a dark, coffee brown and somewhat beady, giving him a shifty look. Aklar dresses in the finest and brightest silks, lending him a flamboyant appearance that his dour attitude doesn't match.

Aklar's chests are all locked tight, and the key hangs on a chain about the merchant's neck. There are seven chests in all, each stuffed with various furs and finely woven rugs. The entire lot is worth up to 600 gp to the right buyer, but there is little market for such items in Sevenecho. Aklar is passing through Sevenecho on his way to Procampur.

Mercenaries, human males F2 (4): AC 5; MV 9; hp 20, 19, 18, 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; ML 15; AL NG; chainmail, longsword, two daggers, javelin.

The Temple of Tymora

After leaving the Worried Wyvern, the PCs should head toward The Lady's Favor, which is the name of Tymora's temple in Sevenecho. As they travel, the PCs immediately notice the quiet of the normally bustling town. The merchant flat to the west is largely empty, and even a few of the homes in the area have been abandoned. Many people keep behind locked doors, trusting no one during this time of crisis. As the PCs approach the temple, read or paraphrase the following description:

A large tent has been erected in front of The Lady's Favor. Robed priests move in and out of the front flap of the tent, bearing bowls of water or trays of food. Coming closer, you see that the inside houses sixteen cots, each bearing a poison victim. These ailing townsfolk moan in pain or call feebly for water. The Tymorans help the sick as best they can, but you notice that the priests and acolytes seem bitter and dismayed.

After a few moments, a Tymoran priestess suddenly notices you. Setting down a tray of bread she was carrying, she approaches you with purpose in her stride. Coming within a few steps of your group, the woman stops and raises her right hand in a gesture of parlay. "Hail and well met, adventurers. What do you seek from the faithful of Tymora, goddess of luck?"

The priestess, Lessa, and all the other clerics were given orders by the high priest, Umast, to watch out for adventuring companies that might wander into the area in response to his offer of employment. If the PCs seek confirmation of Aklar's story, she readily agrees with it, adding the fact that twenty-two people were poisoned. The six victims not accounted for in the tent are kept within the temple, in rooms that are meant to hold the sick or infirm. So many people fell ill at once that the temple was unable to hold them all, and the tent was raised to house the overflow. If the PCs mention Umast's plea for help, Lessa immediately offers to bring them before His Most Blessed of Fate. The truth is that no other adventurers have thus far responded, and the priests are prepared to commission almost anyone willing to undertake the mission. As soon as the PCs agree to meet with Umast, Lessa leads them inside the temple. She leaves them in a sitting room while she informs Umast that he has visitors.

After a few minutes of waiting, an elderly gentleman wearing a resplendent golden robe enters the room. The priest introduces himself as Randolph dul Umast, the temple patriarch, and kindly inquires as to the PCs names. Once introductions are through, read or paraphrase the following to the PCs:

"At the end of last year, a highly coordinated group of highwaymen suddenly appeared on Glorming Pass. Known as the Vipers, they are ruthless and efficient, striking merchant caravans and vanishing into the countryside long before any response can be made. Trackers and constables have been used time and again, but none have found the bandits' lair, believed to lie somewhere in Brynwood Forest. Trails from the marauders would lead into the wood but then vanish suddenly, eliminated by those accustomed to hiding their tracks. This suggests that the bandits are former soldiers or

trackers themselves. Even with my priests aiding the search, the Vipers' base can still not be found. For some reason, all attempts to pinpoint its location magically are foiled.

"Three months ago, the brigands raided a convoy carrying a holy item. The *torque of faith* was to be brought here secretly so as not to arouse the interest of thieves. The Vipers eliminated the entire procession and looted its valuables, including the *torque of faith*. My superiors in Procampur were enraged at the item's theft and gave me permission to use whatever means necessary to reclaim it. To this end, I enlisted the aid of a ranger, Dura Gerathu, who makes his home deep within the Brynwood.

"Dura knows the woods better than any other, and he promised to find the Vipers' hideout. Once a week, he would relay a written message to me via his trained falcon. This week's report is late, but I am not overly concerned, for this is not the first time. Dura will often remain in the field for days at a time before returning to send me a letter.

"This morning, people suddenly became ill. By sunrise, twenty-two ailing townspeople had arrived at the temple. After questioning the sick, we deduced that they all had imbibed water from the same well. The well was closed and the water tested magically, but the tests showed nothing amiss. Nevertheless, suspecting poison we began treatment. All of our magical attempts to neutralize the venom have failed, blocked by some unknown force.

"Our goddess, Tymora, has confirmed that the townspeople have indeed been poisoned and instructed me to 'seek the viper of Brynwood.' I am unsure what this means.

"Without knowing the nature of the poison, we are unable to provide even an herbal cure. Our magical divinations have also been thwarted. What we require is knowledge of the ingredients in the poison, and quickly. The local constabulary is too busy allaying public fears and guarding the other wells to investigate the matter. My own priests are busy ministering to the poisoned, and nearby Maerstar is unwilling to send aid, fearing that they too might face attack. I have already dispatched messengers to Procampur to request assistance, though I fear they shall arrive too late.

"Your mission is to find and infiltrate the Vipers' base and learn what you can about the poison they've concocted. If you could locate the *torque of faith* along the way and recover it, the gesture would be appreciated.

"I suggest that you contact Dura and see what information he has to offer. I can provide you with a map that leads to the small valley where he makes his home.

"For your services, my church will pay your group 400 gp. If you bring back the *torque* as well, I'll provide an extra 200 gp for the trouble. If you travel to Dura's and he cannot help you, then return here, and you'll be given 50 gp for your trouble. Either way, you stand to profit monetarily if nothing else. So I ask, with so many lives riding on this, will you help us?"

If the PCs try to haggle with the high priest, he angrily tells them that he has nothing more to offer, for his church's coffers are not bottomless. Umast refuses to tell the PCs any more about the *torque of faith* than its name, stating that its powers are a closely guarded secret of the priesthood. If the PCs agree to complete the mission, Umast provides them with two potions of *extra-healing* plus the map to Dura's Vale. (The DM should prepare a roughly drawn version of the outdoor map without the locations of the Vipers' Nest and Misty Vale marked.) Umast requests that they leave immediately but understands if they need to provision themselves first.

Lessa Amyselnar, human female P3 of Tymora: AC 5; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13; SD luck roll 1×/day; SZ M; ML 14; AL CG; chainmail, footman's mace, five vials of holy water, holy symbol.

Spells (4/2): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×3)*, *protection from evil*; 2nd—*slow poison**, *withdraw*. Spells marked with an asterisk have been cast in attempts to help the ill.

Lessa is 5'7" tall with strawberry blonde hair that reaches to her waist. She has plain, unremarkable features. Her eyes are a dark blue.

Lessa has been a follower of Tymora all of her life. Her father was a priest of the goddess, and his faith was instilled in his daughter from a young age. Lessa has confidence that Tymora will provide a way, through Umast, to heal the sick.

Randolph dul Umast, human male P9 of Tymora: AC 2; MV 9; hp 61; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 16; SD luck roll 1x/day; SZ M; ML 16; AL CG; chainmail, *footman's mace* +3, *medium shield* +2 (emblazoned with symbol of Tymora), five vials of holy water, holy symbol.

Spells (6/6/4/3/1): 1st—*bless, cure light wounds* (×3)*, *detect poison* (×2)*; 2nd—*augury, hold person, silence 15' radius, slow poison* (×2)*, *withdraw*; 3rd—*continual light, create food and water* (×2)*, *cure disease*; 4th—*divination, neutralize poison* (×2)*; 5th—*commune**. Spells marked with an asterisk have been cast in attempts to help the ill.

Randolph is a tiny man, standing 5'2" tall and weighing only 120 lbs. His aging figure is slightly stooped, and his head is almost completely bald with only a few wisps of white hair. His once vibrant blue eyes have faded slightly with age, leaving behind almost colorless corneas. He is clean-shaven.

Umast is the high priest of The Lady's Favor, the only true temple in Sevenecho. He has governed the temple from its time of construction in 1368 DR and has proven to be a wise and effective leader of the priesthood. He is deeply worried about the poisonings and is searching frantically for a band to seek out the answer to his goddess's mysterious clue.

Finding the Ranger

If the PCs follow the map given to them by Umast, they should have little problem locating the residence of Dura Gerathu. The ranger's home—a large, single room log cabin—occupies a small valley 26 miles from Sevenecho. The path leading down into the valley is

thickly overgrown but serviceable. As the PCs approach the vale, read or paraphrase the following:

> After rounding a copse of trees, you finally catch a glimpse of Dura's cabin resting in the bottom of a bowl-shaped vale near a small lake. A path leads from the forest's edge to the cabin.

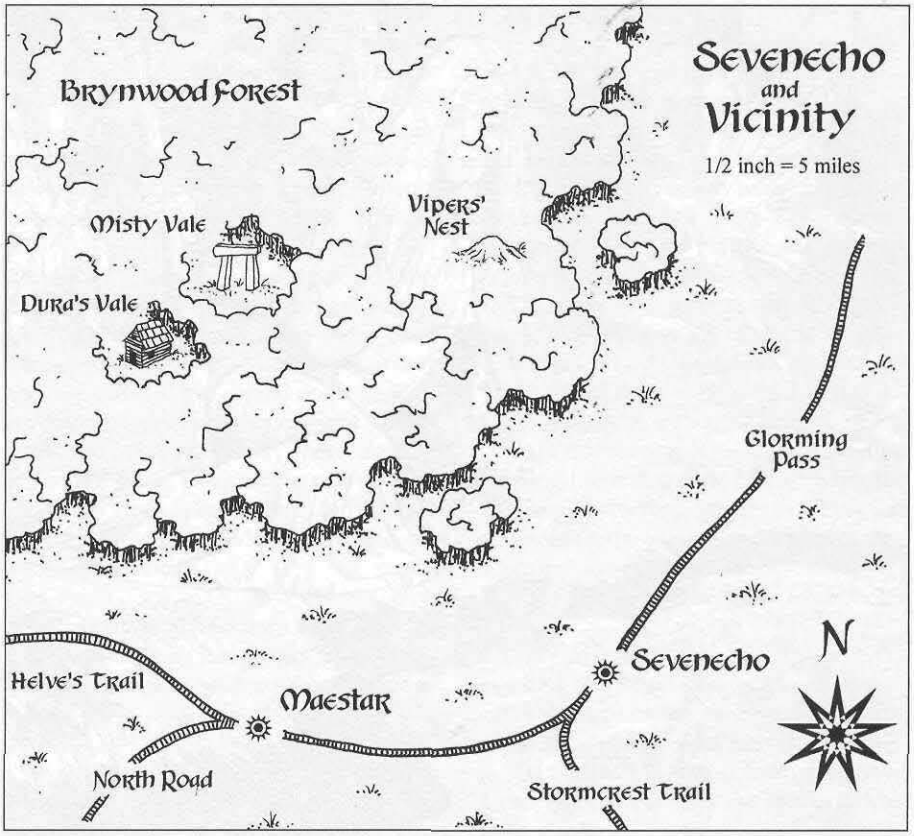
If the PCs follow the path to the cabin, read or paraphrase the following:

> The path ends twenty feet away from the front door of Dura's log cabin home. You notice that the door to the house stands slightly ajar and the shutters of one window are smashed.

The PCs may approach the cabin without harm. About three days before the poisoning of the well in Sevenecho, Cedric discovered that his base was under surveillance by Dura. Though the ranger took great care to hide himself and his tracks, chance sided against him. Cedric recognized the ranger, for the two had met when the Red Brigade had passed through the forest. Concerned that the ranger would reveal the secret location of the Vipers' Nest, Cedric dispatched a group of his soldiers, along with Calispar, to eliminate Dura.

With the aid of Calispar's *silence 15' radius* spells, the Vipers crept toward the cabin late one evening. Dura, who was composing a letter to high priest Umast, was surprised as armed men rushed into his home, one of them even jumping through his front window. Fighting four against one, the ranger held his own until Calispar caught Dura with his *hold person* spell. The Vipers wasted no time killing the ranger.

The Vipers quickly searched the cabin and found the letter Dura had prepared for Umast. Pleased at having thwarted this information leak, Calispar had the soldiers set the note afire and toss it into the fireplace. However, the Vipers didn't stay behind to make sure the paper burned completely away. Shortly after discarding the note, they left the cabin, just as a strong gust of wind blew through the broken window and swept the burning note under Dura's body, where his blood extinguished the flame.



When the PCs enter the cabin, they immediately notice the strong smell of death. Dura's lifeless form lies sprawled across the floor, face down. Leaves and debris have been swept into the cabin from the busted window and open door, covering the floor in trash. As the PCs approach Dura's corpse, they can easily see that he has been dead for some time, as his blood has had time to dry on the floor around him. The Vipers stripped Dura of anything valuable, but moving or inspecting the body reveals the half-burned note hidden under his right arm. Though the note (which is penned in Common) is burned away completely in some places, a single phrase can still be deciphered: "*... seek the Lady of Misty Vale, whose abode lies a league northeast of mine. She is ... ally ...*"

It was Dura's intention to send the letter to Umast the following morning. The message held detailed information about the base's location, secret entrances, special properties, and inhabitants. As a side note, Dura mentioned the Lady of Misty Vale as a reliable contact if needed.

The PCs may explore the cabin and vale unmolested, though they find little of value. Dura's falcon is nowhere to be seen, having returned to the wild when its master was slain. Footprints outside the doorway and the cabin's window can be found by any PC making a successful Tracking proficiency check. However, the tracks vanish at the edge of the surrounding forest. The inside of the cabin holds little of interest, since Dura lived a frugal life. All of his weapons, supplies, and valuables were taken by the Vipers. The small lake next to the house is full of carp but is otherwise unremarkable.

If the PCs bury Dura's corpse, the DM should award each of them a bonus of 150 XP for their charitable and just act.

The Lady of Misty Vale

After slaying Dura the Vipers camped for the evening, then broke camp and headed to the Misty Vale, home of "the Lady." Having read the entirety of Dura's message, Calispar knew that she, too, would have to be slain to keep the location of the Vipers' Nest secret.

The Lady of Misty Vale watches all who enter her domain.

The Misty Vale is a mysterious place, continually veiled in heavy fogs and mists. Home to a clan of sprites, the diminutive folk act as the Lady's eyes and ears, as well as her protectors. Due to their vigilance, the Lady was able to prepare for Calispar and the Vipers.

When the Vipers arrived, the Lady used her magic, along with her invisible sprites, to confuse and mislead the incursors. Using her *obscurement* and *control winds* spells, she enveloped the Vipers in swirling mists. To top off the effect, the Lady cast *hallucinatory forest*, hiding her home in the center of the vale. The fearful Vipers ignored Calispar's commands and fled the area. Cursing his fortune but unable to find his target, Calispar withdrew as well, rejoining the spooked Vipers outside Misty Vale. Furious at his failure, Calispar returned to the Nest. Though beaten for now, the priest of Talona intends to return later to finish the job, after completing his bargain with the Shadowkind.

Worried for Dura's safety, the Lady sent two sprites to check on the ranger. Heavy-hearted, the faerie-folk returned to report Dura's death. The Lady was crushed. Unable to cope with the cruelty of the situation, the Lady fell into a deep state of mourning, from which even the sprites could not rouse her. Since her discovery of Dura's death, the druid has not eaten, slept, or even spoken aloud.

When the PCs approach Misty Vale, they find it fogged over but not to the point that their vision is seriously impaired. Barely visible from the lip of the depression is a ring of standing stones contained within a dense circle of oak trees at the base of the bowl. Though the PCs advance is quickly noted by the sprites, the faerie-folk have no success in drawing the Lady's attention to brace for the arrival of potentially harmful visitors. As such, the PCs find their path to the circle of stones unchallenged and open. After the PCs enter the sacred grove, read or paraphrase the following:

> Beyond a ring of ancient oak trees, you see a small clearing wherein stands a circle of fifteen large stones, gathered together to form five crude arches around a small pool. The waters of the tarn are perfectly still, reflecting the sky above. Next to the pond sits a slight, elderly woman in a homespun brown robe with a white oak staff on her lap.
>
> The woman looks up at you. "So," she rasps, "the Vipers have returned to slay me, eh? My friend and companion, Dura Gerathu, lies dead by your hands. I welcome death as an opportunity to end my grief. Come now! Kill me as you did him!"
>
> The old woman falls quiet, waiting for some action or gesture on your part. However, you see several faeries appear out of thin air between you and the old woman. Drawing tiny swords, the faeries bar your path, their lovely faces hard and set. The foremost faerie speaks aloud in Common, saying, "We shall allow no harm to befall the Lady!"

Between the PCs and the Lady stand twelve sprites. Flanking the PCs are twelve more sprites, all invisible, waiting for some sign of the PCs' intentions before revealing themselves. Finally, at the rear of the party, six more invisible sprites have gathered at a safe distance away, each wielding a sprite bow with drugged arrows. If the PCs make any hostile moves toward the Lady at this point, her protectors fight to the death. The Lady takes no defense against the PCs, even if they physically attack her.

If the PCs announce their desire to speak with the Lady, the sprites relax a bit, lowering their weapons but not putting them away. Any conversation must be held at a proper distance, for the faerie-folk won't allow anyone to come close to the Lady in her current state. Whatever actions the PCs take, the druid seems oblivious, sitting by the pond with her head bowed. If the PCs mention that they are not members of the Vipers, they illicit a small grunt of acknowledgment from the Lady but nothing more.

The druid remains unresponsive until the PCs mention that they are on a

quest to find the Vipers' hideout. At this point, the Lady becomes animated, jumping to her feet (an amazing sight for one of her age). Wild eyed, she takes sudden interest in the PCs and their mission, discussing with them at length the events surrounding their arrival. If the PCs gave the ranger a proper burial and tell the Lady of their deed, she thanks them wholeheartedly. After hearing the PCs' tale, she begins to relate her own.

The Lady fully describes the coming of Calispar and the Vipers to her vale, giving the PCs as much information about the Vipers as she can. She recognized Calispar as a Talonite and shares this tidbit. Next, she explains how her minions found Dura. Finally, she relates all she knows about the Vipers' Nest, including its location, the presence of a dead magic zone, a secret entrance to the north and south, and Dura's suspicion of the north entrance being lightly guarded due to lack of use. The Lady does not know the extent of the dead magic zone or of the presence of a Shadowkind assassin in the Vipers' Nest.

As a follower of Eldath, the druid has no desire to slay the Vipers herself, but she would not bat an eye if the PCs do as much. She hopes that the PCs can invade the Vipers' hideout and destroy them, and she is willing to help them as much as possible. The PCs are welcome to stay in her vale for as long as they like—a safe haven where they may rest and memorize spells. PCs who memorize or pray for spells while in the vale recover spells twice as quickly due to a powerful enchantment emanating from the circle of stones. Before the PCs depart from her vale, The Lady offers to heal any wounds they might have received during their travels. Finally, the druid offers to send a pair of her sprites with the PCs to act as guides to the Vipers' Nest. However, the sprites do not enter the Vipers' lair.

"The Lady," human female D10 of Eldath: AC 10; MV 9; hp 58; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Str 9, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 15; SD +2 save vs. fire or electricity, pass through overgrown areas, *shapechange* into reptile, bird, or mammal (3×/day); ML 15; AL NG; *staff of the woodlands* +2.

Spells (6/6/4/4/2): 1st—*cure light wounds* (×4), *entangle, faerie fire*; 2nd—*barkskin, goodberry, obscurement* (×3)*, *trip*; 3rd—*call lightning, hold animal, spike growth, tree*; 4th—*cure serious wounds* (×2), *hallucinatory forest**, *reflecting pool**; 5th—*control winds**, *cure critical wounds*. The asterisk denotes spells that were cast when the Vipers entered the Misty Vale.

The Lady is 80 years old. Stooped with age, the Druid stands 5'4" tall. She has faded green eyes and long, iron gray hair that she leaves unbound. The simple brown robes she wears conceal her slight, wizened form.

The Lady's history and true name are shrouded in mystery. Called simply the Lady or the Green Lady for many years, her real name is known only to her and a handful of others. What is known of the Lady is that she took residence in the Misty Vale some twenty years ago and went into semi-retirement. Her vale is always shrouded in fog and dotted with illusory forests to keep out visitors.

Sprites (24): AC 6 (2 when invisible); MV 9, fly 18 (B); HD 1; hp 8 (×4), 7 (×6), 6 (×5), 5 (×6), 4 (×2), 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +2 attack rolls when invisible; SD *invisibility* at will, *detect good/evil* (50-yard radius) at will; SZ S; ML 12; INT high (12); AL NG; XP 270; *MM*/328; small sword (1d4/1d3), small bow (1d3/1d3), 20 drugged arrows (save vs. poison or fall asleep for 1d6 hours).

The Vipers' Nest

The Vipers' Nest is contained within a dead magic zone, as denoted by the dotted line surrounding the map; the effects of this zone are detailed in the "Dead Magic Zones" sidebar. The first level is actually built into the side of a low hill, and the lower levels are underground. All walls and ceilings are made of bedrock quarried from underneath the hill. Ceilings are 10 feet high on the underground levels and 15 feet high on the "top" level unless noted otherwise.

Rooms are lit by one or more torches, except where noted. Small, ingenious chimneys adorn the ceiling of each room. These dwarven-crafted shafts allow smoke to rise and dissipate outside, yet they have many nooks and filters that disperse the smoke invisibly. Characters climbing the hill can smell burning wood and see small, trailing embers rising here and there, but the chimneys afford no access to the lair's interior.

Once inside, any dwarf or PC with the Stonemasonry proficiency recognizes the Nest as being of dwarven construction.

If the PCs are led here by the Lady's sprites, the faeries bid the PCs farewell and good luck once within sight of the hill and begin their journey home.

Level 1

1. Guard Room. The secret door leading into this room is carefully crafted on the outside to resemble the barren, blank earth of the hill. Elves and dwarves have a 2-in-6 chance of finding the secret door per hour of searching; other races have a 1-in-6 chance per hour.

This barren room serves as a guard chamber for the base and is patrolled in shifts by Viper soldiers and group leaders. The northern door is locked; only the group leader's key or a skeleton key fits the lock.

PCs entering the base through the secret door have a normal chance of surprising the guards. If the PCs enter the base during the night, there is a 25% chance that one of the guards is asleep in area **2**. The sleeping guard awakens at the sound of combat and arrives in one round. Unless surprised by invaders, the patrol leader hands his key to one of the soldiers, who runs to get help from areas **9** and **10**. Reinforcements arrive within three rounds. If the battle goes poorly even with the reinforcements, a single soldier is dispatched to Level Two to alert the rest of the base.

Viper group leader, human male F1: AC 7; MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+8 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 14; AL NE; XP 35; leather armor, small shield (emblazoned with a coiled viper), broadsword, shortsword, two daggers, silver choker of rank (25 sp), key to northern door.

Viper group leaders function as Cedric's lieutenants, supervising troops and acting as point commanders during raids. It is their responsibility to keep the men in order and maintain the base's

Dead Magic Zones

Dead magic zones are invisible and tend to be spherical or cylindrical, extending both above and below ground. They occur in all terrain and climates, and they are undetectable by magic.

Within a magic dead zone, magic of any sort cannot be cast or activated. This effect applies to both clerical and wizardly magic, allowing neither to operate. Although no one is sure how these areas came to be, their appearance after the Time of Troubles is well documented.

Spells cast into a dead magic zone have no effect, while those with area effects (such as *fireball*) cease to function at the zone's boundary. No one can magically enter or exit a dead magic zone, and divination spells do not function if their target is within one of these zones. Interestingly, spells already in operation when the recipient enters a dead magic zone are unaffected. For example, a magically *charmed* person is still *charmed* after entering.

Spellcasters and creatures with innate magical abilities are aware of the dead magic zone the instant they enter it, for they develop a dull headache. The pain remains until the person or creature departs the zone. Enchanted creatures, such as golems, are able to enter a dead magic zone with no harm, but they are reluctant to do so. Summoned creatures are unable to enter a dead magic zone; to do so would banish them back to whatever place they came from.

Items that function constantly, such as a *sword +2* or a *ring of protection +1*, are unaffected by the zone, as are the effects of potions quaffed before entering the zone. Spells that are cast while within the radius of a dead magic zone do not function, but the incantation erases from the caster's memory as if the spell had worked normally. Any potions drunk within a dead magic zone have no effect, and charges spent from magical items are wasted, again with no tangible result.

Dead magic zones are difficult to remove. A *wish* spell reclaims a 12'-diameter sphere of earth (roughly 1,000 cubic feet). A *limited wish* removes a sphere six feet in diameter (roughly 115 cubic feet).

defenses. These men are all former members of the Red Brigade and follow Cedric's orders without question.

Viper guards, 0-level human males (2): AC 8; MV 12; hp 5 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 13; AL NE; XP 15; leather armor, shortsword, dagger.

These common guards make up the bulk of the Vipers' muscle. Most are former men-at-arms recruited by Cedric or Soren (in secret, of course) after the construction of the Vipers' Nest, although a few of the hardier ones came from the Red Brigade with Cedric. These Vipers guard the base and act as skirmishers during raids.

2. Guard Quarters. This small room contains a pair of poorly made beds for the soldiers on watch. Next to the northern bed is a pair of old, worn, human-sized boots discarded by one of the soldiers.

3. Trophy Hall. This hallway contains various trophies and oddities collected by Cedric during his time as captain of the Red Brigade. To the west stands a 5'-high, 15'-wide oak display cabinet with an all-glass front. The cabinet is locked shut by a simple latch lock (+15% to Open Locks rolls). Shattering the glass alerts the soldiers in areas **1**, **2**, and **9**. Within the cabinet is a collection of battle memorabilia, although two longswords and a small shield with a rampant pony crest are salvageable. Also in the cabinet, among the clutter, is a small pouch containing six pinches of *dust of illusion*.

On the east wall hangs a wide assortment of fading banners, all taken from rival groups slain by the Red Brigade.

To either side of the north door stands a life-sized, black basalt statue, each one resembling a armored warrior kneeling down in subservience or prayer. The statues are unremarkable, worthless, and weigh 500 lbs. apiece.

4. Stairway. This empty room contains a simple staircase descending to the next level of the base. Each round spent in this chamber, there is a noncumulative 10% chance that a Viper guard walks up the stairs on his way to the mess hall (area **9**). PCs standing in this room can occasionally (30% chance) hear faint sounds of combat emanating from area **23**.

Viper guard, 0-level human male: see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

5. Kitchen. This hot room is the domain of Drakar, the Nest's cook. Here, the lonely chef prepares meals for twenty-five hungry men. A large, open-faced fireplace protrudes from the south wall, while a covered drop shaft (leading to area **28**) is built against the eastern wall. The vent of the fireplace acts as all other vents in the Nest, narrowing sharply as it ascends to the surface, full of nooks and crannies to dissipate smoke.

Next to the fireplace is a rack bearing a multitude of pots, pans, and cooking utensils. A preparation table covered with small knives and freshly cut vegetables stands in the middle of the room.

Any time of day, there is a 75% chance that Drakar is in this room fixing a meal or cleaning up after one. If Drakar is present, there is another 50% chance that two soldiers have been collared into assisting him.

Drakar, 0-level human male (cook): AC 10; MV 9; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 7; SZ M; ML 10; AL NE; XP 15; meat cleaver (Dmg 1d4/1d3), key to area **8**.

Drakar stands 6 feet tall and weighs 250 lbs. Though once quite muscular and athletic, he has since let his form go, instead pursuing the delights of cooking. His long, blonde hair is often unkempt and dirty. He has black eyes and a scruffy beard from weeks of not shaving.

Drakar was the personal cook for Cedric during his tenure as captain of the Red Brigade. When Cedric left, Drakar went with him.

Viper guards, 0-level human males (2): hp 5 each; see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

6. Drakar's Bedroom. This small room functions as Drakar's bedroom. Inside is a large, crudely made wooden bed covered with cloth pillows. At the foot of the bed is an unlocked trunk containing all of Drakar's personal possessions. Inside are three clean aprons, an extra set of clothes for a large human, two cookbooks, and a small rack of spices (worth 8 gp to another chef). The chest has a false bottom treated as a secret door. PCs who make a successful Carpentry proficiency check or Find Traps roll can also detect the hidden compartment. Inside, Drakar has hidden away his meager wealth, consisting of two crude silver daggers (worth 12 gp each), a delicate silver-rimmed hand mirror (worth 25 gp), and a small pouch containing 6 gp, 2 sp, and 14 cp.

If Drakar is not present in the kitchen (area **5**), he will be here, sleeping and snoring loudly. The large man is a heavy sleeper and cannot be awakened by anything short of violently shaking him or *combat ensuing inside his room.*

7. Food Storage. This dark, slightly cool room contains a wide assortment of crates and barrels holding food for the base's inhabitants. The room is kept below normal temperature by another unique design of the dwarves.

Within the storeroom are three barrels of apples, five crates of hard baked bread, four crates of heavily salted meat, seven sacks of flour, a box of assorted fresh vegetables, a large tun of cider, twelve barrels of fresh water, and three freshly butchered wild pigs hanging on hooks from the ceiling. In the corner, behind the door, is a five-pound sack of salt and a small cask of honey.

8. Alcohol Storage. All alcohol in the base is kept in a separate storeroom to prevent the men from drinking excessively. The door to this room is kept shut and locked at all times, and only Drakar's key (or one of the skeleton keys) can open it. Despite Cedric's orders, the Vipers often wait for Drakar to fall asleep before stealing the key from the slumbering man. The men are careful to lock the door and return the key once they've had their fill of alcohol. If Drakar is in his quarters when the PCs enter the kitchen, there is a 50% chance that two Viper guards are here, with the door shut and the key in their possession.

The room is kept cool and unlit to prevent the contents from spoiling. Inside are three casks of fine wine, eight large casks of poor quality wine, five kegs of beer, two kegs of mead, and a keg of ale. To the far west of the room is a shelf bearing a small assortment of hard liquors and shot glasses. In particular, there is a brown glass bottle that contains six shots of a strong, nonmagical, dwarven liquor known as "fireseed." Fireseed has little affect on dwarves or gnomes but noticeable effects on other races. A single shot of fireseed grants the imbiber a +1 bonus to saving throws for 1d6 hours, provided the drinker makes a Constitution check at a –2 penalty. If the check fails, the imbiber becomes drunk for 1d6 hours, suffering a –1 penalty to all attack rolls and a one-half movement rate penalty. Any shots taken beyond the first have no additional effects but force the drinker to *make a Constitution check at an additional* –2 penalty per shot or become intoxicated as listed above. Any dwarven character or PC with the Brewing proficiency who passes a check instantly recognizes the concoction upon smelling it and knows of its effects.

Viper guards, 0-level human males (2): hp 5 each; see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

The soldiers are intoxicated by the time the PCs confront them, and they attack at a –1 penalty. The drunken soldiers do not even consider going for help in their befuddled state.

9. Mess Hall. This large room serves as the Vipers' dining area, capable of housing every occupant at once. Three long tables, each seating ten men, occupy the largest portion of the room. At the end of the northernmost table, dirty dishes are stacked for Drakar (or one of his unwilling helpers) to take down to area **28** and wash. Clean dishes are stacked on the opposite end of the same table.

The Vipers eat here at mostly random times, due to the wide number of activities going on at any given moment. This keeps Drakar both busy and grouchy. At any time, there are three Viper guards here, eating a meal.

Viper guards, 0-level human males (3): hp 6 (×2), 5; see area **1** for statistics.

10. Back Entry Room. This room is similar to area **1**, except it is more poorly guarded. The secret door is only occasionally used and has been covered on the outside with vines to make it more closely resemble the overgrown northern portion of the hillside. The door's fine craftsmanship and additional camouflage means that elves and dwarves have a 1-in-6 chance of locating it; other races have a 1-in-8 chance. The southern door is locked; however, the group leader stationed here carries a skeleton key that fits the lock (as well as the locks of all doors in the Nest).

A Viper group leader and Viper guard are stationed here, watching for intruders. Since this room is seldom used and its secret door is harder to locate than the one to the south, the guards assigned to this room are lax. If the PCs enter the Vipers' Nest via this chamber, they *impose a –2 penalty to the guards' surprise rolls.* Each round of combat has a noncumulative 60% chance of waking the guard in area **11**, who arrives in one round.

If the Vipers are not surprised, the group leader hands his skeleton key to the guard, who runs to fetch help from area **9**. These reinforcements arrive in one round. If the battle still goes poorly, one of the guards flees to the lower level and alerts the rest of the base to the PCs' presence.

Viper group leader, human male F1: hp 9; see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

Viper guard, 0-level human male: hp 5; see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

11. Guard Quarters. This small room contains a decrepit wooden bed. Unless awakened by the sounds of combat in area **10**, a single Viper guard is sleeping here. The room is otherwise empty.

Viper guard, 0-level human male: hp 5; see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

12. Secret Supply. This secret room was built at the behest of Cedric and is stocked with supplies for his escape from the base, should it become necessary. The secret doors to the south and west are

finely crafted and difficult to detect (dwarves have a 2-in-6 chance; elves have a 1-in-6 chance; other races have a 1-in-8 chance). The room is unlit and lacks the chimneys of all the other rooms. Only Cedric and his dwarven miners know of the room's existence. An iron rung ladder leads down to Level Two, to a tiny room with another secret door. (See area **13** for details.)

Inside the room, on a small table in the eastern corner, is a wide variety of traveling items. These include three sets of plain clothing, a pair of walking boots, a set of leather armor (fitted for a large human), a hooded lantern with two flasks of oil, three torches, 50 feet of hemp rope, two daggers, a shortsword, five full waterskins, enough dry rations for three weeks, and a large backpack. Inside the backpack is a small pouch containing 15 gp, 20 sp, and 25 cp and an *obsidian steed (figurine of wondrous power)* with the command word, "shizrak," carved into its base.

Level 2

13. Stairway. This room holds little more than the staircase ascending to the first level of the base. From this room, the sounds of combat coming from area **23** can be clearly heard.

The secret door in the north wall leads to a small chamber with an iron rung ladder leading up to area **12**. A secret door in the south wall leads to area **16**. Elves and dwarves have a 2-in-6 chance of detecting the secret doors; other races have a 1-in-6 chance.

14. Hallway. The walls of this corridor have been carved into flowing murals depicting large snakes attacking caravans and swallowing wagons whole.

15. Game Room. This room is dedicated solely to the entertainment of the Vipers. In the northwest corner is a large, rectangular table that holds a 3' × 3' chess field, along with pieces matched to scale. The southwestern corner holds a rectangular card table, complete with six chairs and two decks of playing cards on the table top. On the eastern side of the room hang three dartboards, each with two sets of darts stuck in its face.

This room is the favored relaxation place of Cedric's dwarven engineers, who can be found here at almost any given hour of the day, playing games and discussing various mechanical topics. The dwarves have a special passion for darts and often become involved in lengthy team games. If the base is on alert, the dwarves are absent, as they are with Cedric in area **16**.

Engineers, dwarven males F1 (4): AC 3; MV 6; hp 10, 9 (×2), 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +4 to saves vs. poison and magic; 120' infravision; SZ S; ML 13; AL NE; XP 65; splintmail, small shield (emblazoned with a coiled viper), small pick-ax (Dmg 1d6/1d4+1).

These dwarves are former members of the Red Brigade and unwavering in their loyalty to Cedric. They designed and built the Vipers' Nest with some help from the guards.

16. Battle Room. This spacious chamber acts as Cedric's battle room and conference chamber. Ten torches flicker from various spots about the room, providing ample illumination. Here, the senior members of the Vipers discuss raiding plans and objectives, as well security and supplies for the base. A large table to the west holds a scale model of Brynwood forest, Sevenecho, and Glorming Pass. The Vipers' leaders often mull over this map as they ponder strike techniques, terrain, and risk. To the east is another table, this one used to seat all the senior members (Cedric, Calispar, Soren, all four group leaders, and the dwarven engineers). To the north is a plush, high-backed chair that Cedric sarcastically refers to as "the throne." Cedric sits here when listening to the concerns of the Viper guards or when an outsider seeks permission to stay in the Nest (as in the case of Autton Shadowshroud).

If the base hasn't been alerted to the PCs' presence (i.e., no one from the upper level was sent down), there is a 75% chance that Cedric and Soren are here, talking quietly over their model and laying plans for the next caravan raid. If the base has been warned, Cedric and Soren are here, ready for battle, along with the dwarves from area **15**, the soldiers from area **23**, and any extra soldiers from area **25**. In this case, the PCs are in for a tough fight, as the defenders practically spring upon them as soon as they enter the room. No matter how the PCs meet Cedric, if he is reduced to half his hit points, he tries to flee through the secret door to the north and get to his secret supply room (area **12**) on Level One (via the secret chamber with the iron ladder north of area **13**).

Cedric Ravajar, human male F3: AC 5; MV 12; hp 24; THAC0 17 (16 with two-handed sword specialization); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +1 (+3 with specialization); Str 17 (+1/+1), Dex 12, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17; SZ M; ML 16; AL NE; XP 120; chainmail, two-handed sword (specialized), *shortsword +1*, two daggers, skeleton key (opens all locked doors in the Nest), key to chests in area **22**, eight matching silver rings (worth 5 sp each or 5 gp for the set), thick silver hoop earring (worth 4 sp), belt pouch containing 18 gp, 9 sp, and 14 cp.

Cedric stands a 6'5" tall and weighs 250 lbs. Athletic and muscular, he keeps his body in excellent shape. Cedric has light green eyes and red hair that he wears long, often tied into a loose ponytail. Although he doesn't sport a true beard, he often goes days without shaving, leaving a coating of red stubble upon his chin and cheeks.

Cedric has spent most of his adult life as a mercenary. He rose to the position of Captain of the Red Brigade after a tenure of four years, thanks to his Charisma and skill with the two-handed sword. After discovering the dead magic zone in Brynwood, he left the Brigade with a few trusted allies to go into business for himself. He is exceedingly proud of the Vipers' Nest and enjoys the wealth and prosperity that its construction has brought to his group.

Soren Whitespear, human male F2: AC 6; MV 12; F2; hp 18; THAC0 19 (base); #AT 1 (2 when fighting with two weapons); Dmg by weapon type; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9; SZ M; ML 15; AL LE; XP 65; shortsword, *dagger +1*, five nonmagical daggers, plumed helm with silver filigree (worth 35 gp), skeleton key (opens all locked doors in the Nest), belt pouch containing 2 ep, 10 gp, 5 sp, and 16 cp.

Soren is 5'9" tall and weighs 175 lbs. His small frame belies his power and

grace, and he possesses the stamina of a bull. He has short, wavy blond hair and pale blue eyes. He keeps his cheeks and chin clean shaven but sports a thick mustache that droops down past the corners of his mouth. Above each collarbone, he has tattooed a flaming saber (the symbol of the Red Brigade), and his neck bears a winding serpent that wraps upward from the jugular to the base of his skull.

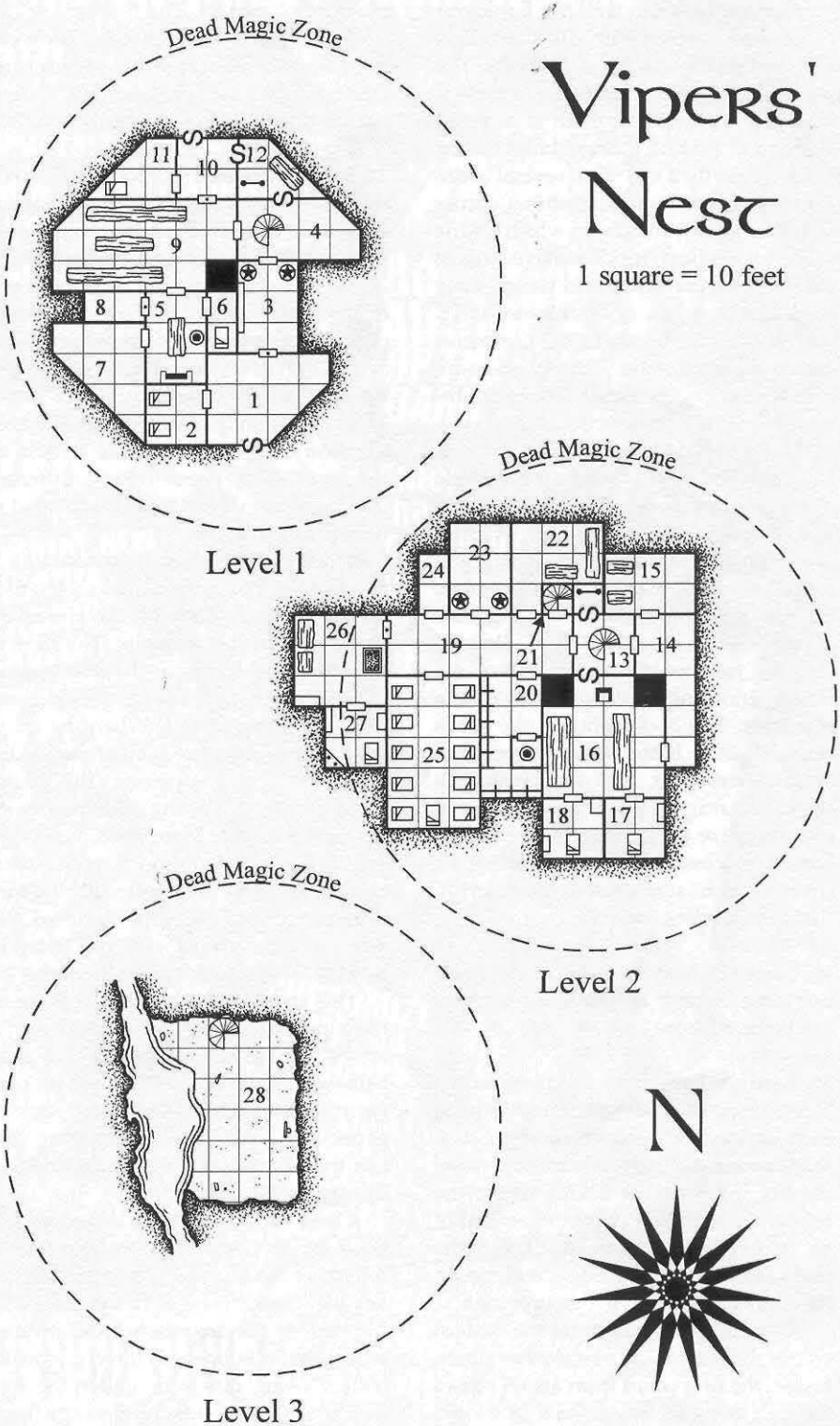
Soren was Cedric's second-in-command in the Red Brigade until the group's separation in 1368 DR. The pair were best friends before joining the Brigade and have remained so throughout the years. When Cedric conceived the plan for building the Vipers' Nest, Soren expressed some reluctance. He loathes preying upon merchant caravans, which he views as a waste of his warrior's prowess. His great love is battle; he often fights stripped to the waist with his shortsword in one hand and his magical dagger in the other. When raiding, he is always at the forefront, ready and eager to engage any guards the merchants might have in their employ.

When wielding two weapons, Soren suffers no penalty with his primary weapon (shortsword) and a –2 attack penalty with his secondary weapon.

17. Soren's Bedroom. This spacious bedroom belongs to the Vipers' second-in-command. If Soren isn't in area **16** when the PCs enter, he is here, practicing his two-weapon fighting techniques.

Against the south wall rests a four poster bed layered with cloth sheets and pillows. Beside the bed is a small night stand that holds nothing but a single candle in a bronze holder (worth 2 cp). The northeast corner contains a wardrobe holding all of Soren's clothes. Inside are three sets of breeches, five loose shirts, two pairs of boots, two pairs of gloves, and a thick, black cloth cloak, all fitted for a normal-sized human. The cloak is actually a *cloak of protection +1*, though Soren isn't aware of its properties and simply stores it here with his normal items. In the northwest corner of the room is a small stand with a wash basin, an oval mirror, and a pair of towels.

18. Cedric's Bedroom. This bedroom belongs to the Vipers' leader. If Cedric



isn't in area **16** when the PCs enter, he is lying down on his bed, reading.

Against the south wall is a large four poster bed covered with silk sheets and excellent quality covers and pillows. The set could fetch 20 gp from an interested merchant. Beside the bed is a small nightstand bearing a single brass candle holder (worth 2 cp) and several extra candles. In the room's northeast corner stands a cedar wardrobe in which Cedric stores his clothing. Inside are five pairs of breeches, several shirts and tunics, three thick cloaks, a pair of black hose, and a pair of walking boots. In the northwest corner is a small stand with a wash basin, mirror, and towels. Finally, in the southwest corner is a bookshelf.

The novels on the shelf are written in Common and discuss warcraft and battle strategy. A few books stand out, notably *The Mysterious Harpers* by Alamar Djelmuth (worth 135 gp), *Machinations of a Red Wizard* by Celemir of Procampur (worth 75 gp), and *The Field of Battle* by Hludar Sylem (worth 50 gp). Pressed between two books on siege tactics is a slender traveling spellbook taken from a merchant. The book contains the spells *alarm, dancing lights, detect magic, light, mount, deeppockets,* and *fog cloud*. PCs with the Ancient Languages proficiency can recognize the grimoire's true nature with a successful check by reading its cover, which states, in a rare script, *Akdam's Traveling Spellbook*.

19. Large Hallway. This hallway is unremarkable. Sounds of practicing soldiers can be heard from area **23**.

20. Latrine. This room functions as the Nest's disposal. There are ten stalls here, each divided by wooden railing. Small shafts run under each stall, spilling waste directly into area **28** below, where the refuse is washed away by the current of an underground river. This keeps the room free of offensive odors and makes for a much cleaner living environment.

A small, square room on the eastern side of the latrine acts as a storage closet. Inside, the drop shaft from area **5** passes through along its way to area **28**. Stored around the shaft are various mops, brooms, and buckets.

21. Spiral Staircase. This tiny room holds a spiral staircase that descends 40 feet to the floor of area **28**. The first half of the staircase travels through solid bedrock, but the latter 20 feet winds downward through open air, presenting a falling hazard due to lack of handrails.

22. Supply Room. This room holds all of the basic supplies for the Vipers, along with their collective funds. Hanging on pegs or lying on tables are various useful items including several coils of rope, dozens of hooded lanterns, shovels, picks, and small hand tools. Scattered about the floor are crates of torches, boxes of oil flasks, and barrels of pitch. Most importantly, however, are the two identical chests that sit in the middle of the room. Each chest holds a different portion of the Vipers' group funds and is fully detailed below.

Chest #1: This chest is locked with a fine lock (–10% to Open Locks rolls) that can be opened only with the chest key that Cedric carries with him. The chest is also trapped with a dwarven-made mechanism that imposes a –15% penalty to Remove Traps rolls. When the lid is raised, three darts fire from under the lid into the person opening the trunk (THAC0 16), inflicting 1d3 points of damage per dart. More insidious, however, is the Type L poison that coats each barb. Unlocking the chest with the key does not disarm the trap. To do so, the key must be turned one full rotation beyond what it took to pop the lock.

This chest holds the loose coinage of the Vipers' plunder. Inside are 12 pp, 23 ep, 84 gp, 113 sp, 256 cp, 15 slim gold bars (worth 3 gp each), 18 slim silver bars (worth 5 sp each), and a small sack of gems. The sack holds a waterstar (100 gp), three lynx eyes (15 gp each), and five fire agates (10 gp each).

Chest #2: This chest is locked with a good quality lock (–10% to Open Locks rolls) that can be unlocked with the chest key that Cedric carries. This chest is also trapped. If the trap is not deactivated when the lid is opened, three scythelike blades swing out from under the top, inflicting 1d6 points of damage each (THAC0 16) to whoever opened the chest. Unlocking the chest does not eliminate the trap. To deactivate it, the key must be turned one full rotation beyond what it took to unlock the chest.

This chest contains various valuable items that the Vipers have stolen. Inside are a solid silver platter (worth 18 gp), a thick, white gold bracer (worth 130 gp), a platinum comb (worth 20 gp), a small sack of 14 gold bands (wedding rings, worth 2 gp each), the missing *torque of faith* sought by the priests of Tymora, and a set of four 8" × 10" paintings depicting Waterdeep during the various seasons (200 gp each or 1,600 gp for the set). Any PC with the Artistic Ability proficiency instantly recognizes the rare paintings as works of Ruben Delgaug, a master artist long since deceased.

See the "New Magical Item" sidebar for information on the *torque of faith*.

23. Practice Room. This is where the Vipers hone their fighting skills and train to work together in groups. The northern portion of the room has lines drawn on the floor delineating two sparring rings. One of the rings is intended for weapons combat training and has several wooden mock weapons hanging on the nearby walls. The other ring is used for barehanded combat and has a thick canvas mat covering the floor. In the center portion of the room, three targets hang on the west wall, placed for soldiers to practice throwing daggers. A line 15 feet away from the targets marks where the throwers stand. In the southern portion of the room, on either side of the door, stand two wooden practice dummies crudely carved to resemble life-sized humans. The dummies are rigged to hold swords and shields and have been dressed in ragged chainmail and helms.

When the PCs enter this room, they find a pair of Viper guards sparring against on another while a Viper group leader and another guard practice dagger throwing. If the Nest is on alert, the soldiers are absent and waiting in area **16** with Cedric.

Viper group leader, human male F1: hp 8; see area **1** for stats and equipment.

Viper guards, 0-level human males (3): hp 6, 5 (×2); see area **1** for statistics and equipment.

24. Armory. This narrow little room acts as the Vipers' armory, holding their extra

weapons and armor. Items hang on pegs or in stacks against the walls. Swords and arrows can be found in barrels. Accounting for armor, the room holds five buckler shields, five small shields, two medium shields (all emblazoned with the coiled viper symbol), eight sets of leather armor, and two sets of chainmail. All armor is sized to fit the average human. As for weapons, the room contains 15 shortbows, 100 sheaf arrows, 40 daggers, ten shortswords, five broadswords, two longswords, a single two-handed sword, and a bundle of 20 javelins tied together in one corner.

25. Barracks. This large room acts as the communal quarters for all of the Viper guards, group leaders, and dwarven engineers. Bunk beds line both sides of the chamber, each sparsely covered with coarse cloth sheets and pillows. The far southern corners hold beds considerably smaller than the rest, for these are for use by the dwarves.

Each of the eleven sets of bunk beds has a small chest at the foot of the bed where the warriors store their gear while sleeping. All of the soldiers in the previously mentioned areas that required rolls to be present are here sleeping, if the roll for their appearance failed. Sleeping soldiers are pretty much naked, with their equipment stashed in the trunks. Merely entering the room won't disturb the fighters, but activity above the volume of a whisper will rouse these trained light sleepers. If awakened, it takes a soldier two rounds to get properly dressed for battle. If the base is on alert, this room is empty when the PCs enter, as extra guards have been summoned by Cedric to area **16**.

26. Calispar's Workshop. The door to this chamber is locked with a very fine lock (–20% to Open Locks rolls) that can only be unlocked with one of the skeleton keys or a *knock* spell.

Inside, Calispar toils unceasingly to perfect his poison for the Shadowkind as quickly as possible, while Autton Shadowshroud looks on. The encounter described below will always be the same, regardless of the Nest's alert status. As soon as the door to the chamber begins to open, Autton slips quietly into the northeast corner, behind the door, and waits for a chance to strike.

Read or paraphrase the following if the PCs enter Calispar's laboratory:

> The room is brightly lit by a small, illuminated pebble that hangs from the ceiling on the opposite side of the room. Near the door is a large planter's box filled with various types of plants, but your attention is drawn to the far side of the room where a robed figure stands near a table covered with a puzzling conglomeration of beakers, alembics, vials, and glass tubing. The delicate apparatus smokes and whines as greenish fluids flow through the system.
>
> "So," says the robed figure. "Our little hideout has finally been discovered, has it? Well, that doesn't change anything. You're too late to ruin my plans!"

The edge of the dead magic zone runs through this room, dividing it into two roughly equal halves. The stone the PCs see is a pebble with a *continual light* spell cast upon it—a clue that magic works to some extent within this chamber. The stone provides light for Calispar's little garden of toxic flora, which grows in the planter's box just south of the door.

The apparatus behind Calispar is used to refine the toxic nature of the plants into various poisons. Sitting on the same table are four vials of 100% magic-resistant Type J poison.

PCs with the Herbalism proficiency recognize Calispar's distillation equipment and know how the apparatus works. To the south of the alchemical equipment stands a smaller table and a bookshelf. The smaller table holds various open books, all of them specializing in alchemy and herbalism. The bookshelf holds an even wider variety of herbalist references, including several pertaining to brewing poisons.

During Calispar's speech, Autton waits patiently behind the door for all the PCs to enter the room. As the last person crosses the threshold, he springs out from concealment, backstabbing the last PC. Autton then engages the PCs in combat from the rear, fighting until reduced to half his hit points, at which point he attempts to flee. If Calispar is slain, Autton tries to escape, valuing his own life above the success of his mission.

New Magical Item

Torque of Faith

The *torque of faith* looks like an ordinary torque made of unadorned gold. Upon closer inspection, the viewer notices that the piece is constructed entirely from gold coins of various sizes, interlocking so snugly as to be almost seamless.

The *torque of faith* radiates no magic if viewed under *detect magic*, and it is quite mundane until worn by a specialty priest of Tymora. When donned by one of this order, the item radiates a faint, golden aura barely visible when seen in daylight. A priest of Tymora wearing the *torque* can use his or her luck roll ability (see *Faiths & Avatars* for details) as many times as per day as desired, at a +2 bonus instead of a +1. The church of Tymora considers this item to be priceless, though it would sell on the open market for 700 gp for its craftsmanship and gold content.

Calispar is lying to the PCs; he has not yet finished creating the Shadowkind's poison. He does not attack immediately; instead, he holds up his hands in a gesture of surrender and waits patiently for the PCs to come at him, thus leaving the dead magic zone and making them susceptible to his spells and Autton's backstab. If the PCs use missile weapons against him or attack the alchemical apparatus on the table, Calispar draws his poisoned dagger and closes for combat. Under no circumstances does he flee; Calispar is obsessed with completing his bargain with the Shadowkind and extracting his revenge upon his foes.

Calispar Delgorth, human male P5 of Talona: AC 5; MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 9; SD +4 to save vs. poison (save allowed vs. poisons that normally allow no save); identify poison in drinks; SZ M; ML 18; AL CE; XP 975; chainmail, footman's mace, ceremonial poison dagger (Type A poison; enough for three uses), three blocks of *incense of meditation*, *glasses of*

Calispar perfects his deadly poison.

comprehending languages and reading magic (same as *helm*), skeleton key (opens all locked doors in the Nest), holy symbol of Talona, belt pouch containing two slim gold bars (worth 3 gp each), five slim silver bars (worth 5 sp each), 16 gp, 15 sp.

Spells (5/5/2): 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds* (×3), *protection from good*; 2nd—*aid, hold person, poison touch, silence 15' radius, withdraw*; 3rd—*dispel magic, prayer*. The spell *poison touch* is detailed in *Faiths & Avatars* (page 154); if this resource is unavailable, replace that spell with *spiritual hammer*.

Calispar stands 6'1" tall and weighs 200 lbs. His jet black hair is crudely and closely cut, and his face is clean shaven. His eyes are black and beady. Like many in his order, Calispar bears facial tattoos, mostly blue and black whirls upon his forehead and cheeks.

Calispar has been dealing with a guild of assassins known as the Shadowkind, based in Procampur. The two sides have stuck a deal in which Calispar agrees to develop a magic resistant poison in exchange for the guild's promise that it will discretely eliminate a few of Calispar's enemies in Procampur. Although Calispar knows how to make poisons magic resistant, he is still working on one deadly enough to suit the Shadowkind's needs.

Autton Shadowshroud, elven male F3/T3: AC 5; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+1 with Strength bonus); Str 16, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12; SA backstab (+4 to hit for double damage); SD 90% resistance to *sleep* and *charm*; SZ M; ML 14; AL CE; XP 420; leather armor, shortsword, six daggers, vial of Type O poison (enough for two applications), shortbow, 12 flight arrows, belt pouch containing 8 gp and 9 cp.

Thief abilities: PP 25%, OL 30%, FRT 5%, MS 80%, HS 85%, DN 20%, CW 70%, RL 0%.

Autton stands a mere 5'2" tall and weighs 120 lbs. Though thin of limb and body, he is quite strong, often surprising opponents in combat. His short, blond hair has been dyed black (a custom of the Shadowkind assassins). He has almond colored eyes that sparkle with intelligence and malice.

27. Calispar's Bedroom. A plush, four poster bed rests against the south wall of this bedchamber. Next to the bed is a barren nightstand. In the northeastern corner stands a wardrobe containing all of Calispar's clothing. Found within are five dark robes, a heavy woolen cloak, and a pair of walking boots.

In the southwest corner, outside of the dead magic zone, is a small shrine to Talona where Calispar prays for his spells. In the northwest corner is a small, open-faced cabinet.

The cabinet holds a variety of items including a large, worn book. The book has no title, only a dark green binding made from green dragon hide. The tome is Calispar's journal and fully details his experiments with magic-immune poisons. Using this journal, anyone with the Herbalism proficiency can learn to make poisons of various types; creating magic-resistant poisons, however, requires a special environment involving a dead magic zone like the one encapsulating the Vipers' Nest. An herbalist can also use the journal to fashion cures for poison. Calispar does not list the cost for ingredients and equipment; the DM may determine these costs as needs permit. To make his secrets harder to steal, Calispar has written the entire journal in Dethek.

Also in the cabinet are four unmarked vials of 100% magic-resistant Type I poison and two unmarked vials of 75% magic-resistant Type B poison. These were created by Calispar during early experiments. Finally, the cabinet holds five tall vials of clear fluid; these are clearly marked in Common as "antitoxin." A single dose detoxifies any normal or magic-resistant poison on contact. Each vial holds five doses of antitoxin. They can be sold for as much as 500 gp per vial.

Level 3

28. Riverside. This large, open room has a 20'-high ceiling and contains little more

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than sand and dirt. The underground river was discovered when the dwarven engineers tunneled into this room, which was at that time a rough, natural cavern. Since then, the walls have been smoothed, but the river itself was left untouched. It ranges in depth from five to fifteen feet.

Refuse and waste from areas **5** and **20** flows down through openings in the ceiling and falls into the river, to be swept away by the current. From upstream, which is to the south, clean water constantly flows in from a narrow tunnel in the wall. The Vipers often use this section of the river to clean clothing and bathe.

Concluding the Adventure

Upon returning to Sevenecho with the antidote in hand, the PCs are hailed by the townsfolk as heroes. For months thereafter, the PCs are invited to various parties and receive dinner invitations from the local families. High Priest Umast promptly pays the PCs their fee, thanking them for their services and praising their bravery.

If the PCs recover Calispar's vials of antitoxin, they should receive a group story award of 1,500 XP. Recovering the *torque of faith* earns the party 1,000 XP. If the PCs recover or destroy Calispar's journal, the DM may choose to award an additional 500 XP, at his or her discretion.

No matter how many of the Vipers were slain, the group quickly realizes its secrecy has been compromised. Those remaining flee the Vipers' Nest. The priests of Tymora mount a force to attack the Nest a few days after the PCs return but find the base deserted. If Cedric was left alive and the PCs didn't recover the *torque of faith*, he takes as much treasure with him as he can handle when he leaves, including the *torque*. This could lead to further adventures as the priests of Tymora commission the PCs to hunt down Cedric and claim their relic.

If the PCs retrieve it, Calispar's journal soon becomes a source of worry as news of the existence of a magic-resistant poison spreads. Other priests of Talona, as well as various alchemists and herbalists, might seek the journal for their own use. PCs who keep the journal might find themselves hounded by various determined "collectors."

Another consequence the PCs face is the wrath of the Shadowkind. Whether or not Autton escapes, the guild learns of the PCs' involvement in stopping the delivery of their promised venom. The matter doesn't please the assassins. Sooner or later, the Shadowkind tries to repay the PCs for the harm they caused.

Finally, there is the matter of the effects of dead magic zones upon indigenous plant life. The DM may rule that the properties of dead magic fade after a certain period of time away from the zone. Alternatively, this discovery could be the source of new magic-resistant items. A ship, wagon, or longbow constructed of magic-resistant wood might be a prize worth fighting for! Ω

Special Thanks To Our Playtesters!

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Mark "Demonhunter" Stefano
John "Bloodaxe" Kidner
Steve Marsh
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AND MORE!

Oerth Revisited

As an original subscriber who has spent several years away from commercially prepared products, I want you to know that I am very impressed with the adventures you are printing nowadays. In particular, I am very glad to see GREYHAWK® adventures return to your pages and the use of one of my favorite monsters, the rakshasa, in "The Setting Sun" (Issue #73).

I am amazed that in the seven or so years since I let my subscription lapse, the great "particular world" vs. "generic adventure" debate continues. While I acknowledge that some adventures require more work than others to conform to your campaign, let me assure all of your skeptical readers that the work *always* pays off in the long run. Although commercially prepared dungeons can be fun, especially for the hack-and-slash and puzzle-solving crowd, DMs who run such games should, for the sake of their own enjoyment and that of their players, customize, enhance, and personalize each adventure that they present to their group. Use your boss as the personality for the wicked spectre in "The Necromancer's Pet." If one of your players can't stand arrogant, spoiled, rich people, design one and place him in the Village by the Sea in "Quoitine Quest." Perhaps the spoiled noble is a member of a powerful merchant house in your campaign. If the players molest or injure him, his family will certainly respond, directly or indirectly. Perhaps they hire the PCs to clear Iniarv's Tower in "Eye of Myrkul," knowing full well the dangers to befall the party.

Don't hesitate to tinker with the modules in *DUNGEON Adventures*. Also, consider adding people and places from *DUNGEON Adventures* or other commercial products to your campaign. The original printing of *Lankhmar, City of Adventure* has been the basis of the City of Greyhawk in my campaign since 1985. The *City of Greyhawk* boxed set has been the basis of the City of Rel Astra in my campaign since it was released in 1989. Grog, the half-ogre innkeeper from "Trouble at Grog's" in Issue #4, will soon be opening a new tavern near the stronghold of one of my longtime players in the Wild Coast. As you redesign, you will be teaching yourself to design and can eventually weave several plots into any of the modules presented in *DUNGEON Adventures* with a little bit of work and imagination.

Bruce Bozzo
Barrataria@aol.com

More Plot, Please

I have been a loyal reader for several years but have never written before. However, I was motivated to do so by your comment in Issue #73 wanting to hear from someone who didn't think the Mere of Dead Men series was a good idea. While I have to say that all of the individual adventures were quite good, the series itself was pretty boring. Essentially, it was the same adventure five times: "Sir Justin sends you into the mere to investigate yet another mysterious ruin." Yeah, the last one got a little creative and had the dragon send the party out, but that's a pretty feeble excuse for breaking up the monotony.

DUNGEON Adventures would never publish a module with a simple plot like "rescue the princess from the evil cleric and his undead minions." Any DM could create a similar scenario themselves in about five minutes. By the same token, if you are going to publish a series, there should be some creativity and originality in the overall plot line as well as the individual adventures. All I need to do is find four or five adventures that I like, change the background slightly so that the characters' boss (the king, the archmage, the guildmaster, or whoever) wants them to look into [*insert background events here*], and I have a series with as much cohesion as the Mere of Dead Men.

As for your idea of a series based around an inn: same deal. Most adventures either already have an inn or could have an inn added to them very easily.

A good series should have a plot where the characters' goals, motivations, and relationships with NPCs mature and develop over the course of the story, rather than using the same setup to link otherwise unrelated dungeons. I realize that there is a need to make adventures stand alone for those who might not have access to all of the series. However, I think it is relatively easy to make a serial adventure complete by itself, and very hard to take independent scenarios and make an interesting series of them.

Christopher Hurd
Fremont, CA

Imagine This!

In Issue #73 you asked for opinions about serialized adventures. I don't want to see future series compiled into one issue. How would that make it any different from other regular, generic AD&D adventure modules? The price, maybe?

I haven't played the Mere of Dead Men series yet, and you mentioned the

continued on page 86

reason for that in your editorial: It took ten months to get the final part. As a DM, I like to know where the adventure is headed before running it.

I generally like the idea of connected adventures in the magazine. There have been some adventures in past issues that referred to older modules. If executed in such a manner that DMs can insert their own adventures before returning to the next part of a series, I am all for it. That means that all parts should be small adventures unto themselves, making it possible to skip one part without hurting the overall "plot."

Every issue contains one adventure or another that doesn't fit my current campaign. I can always "hoard" unused adventures for later reference and inspiration, and to me it doesn't really matter if I have to hoard an entire series. So far every module in *DUNGEON Adventures* has had its purpose and has found its way into my games, one way or the other.

Let me offer a new thought: Why not have a series of adventures based around a locale—as opposed to a plot?

In the early eighties, the UK branch of TSR, Inc. published *IMAGINE® Magazine*. That magazine had its own campaign setting, the world of Pelinore, of which the readers saw hardly more than The City League. The adventures focused on the Free City and its surrounding lands, the county of Cerwyn. Every issue of *IMAGINE Magazine* contained a small adventure module (usually six to eight pages long) and described a locale from the city in detail—buildings, businesses, neighborhoods, guilds, people, and such. Sometimes the source material had connections to the adventure, and sometimes it just added flesh to The City League. Over the years the portrayal of the city grew, and it became a place like no other.

I never played in Pelinore proper, but I used nearly everything from that series. I'd like to see Pelinore and The City League make a comeback—not as a complete campaign setting with hardcover books or boxed sets, but in the format for which it was devised: a slowly growing magazine series.

Dirk Remmecke
Hannover, Germany

What you've described sounds a lot like the LIVING CITY™ campaign setting featured in POLYHEDRON® Newszine, available to current RPGA® Network members. Almost every issue expands on some facet of the city of Ravens Bluff and its environs.

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